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Village Industries

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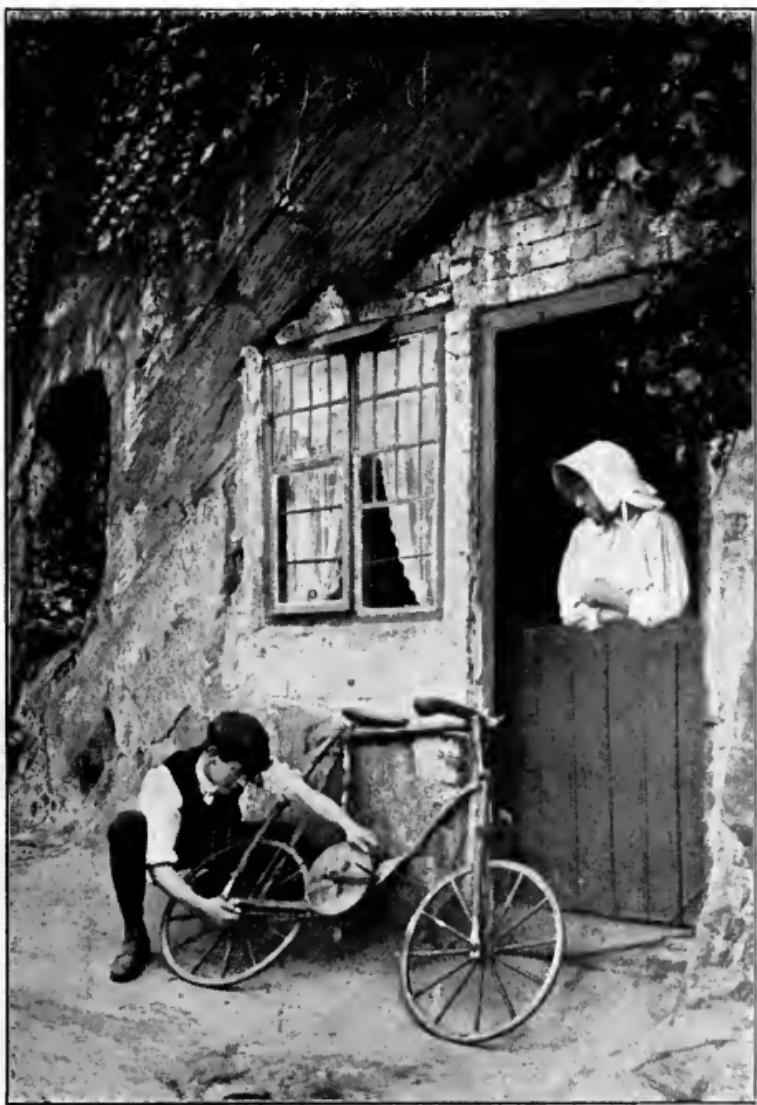
J. L. GREEN

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VILLAGE INDUSTRIES
A NATIONAL OBLIGATION

VILLAGE TALENT



A HOME-MADE BICYCLE

Composed of sticks from the hedges, old hoops from barrels, and other odds and ends. Who shall measure the latent talent in the way of home crafts of the individual who made this machine; which machine, if it broke no records, also broke no bones?

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

A NATIONAL OBLIGATION

BY

J. L. GREEN

Secretary of the Rural League

Life Fellow of the Royal Economic Society

Author of "Allotments and Small Holdings"

"English Country Cottages," etc.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE RIGHT HON. JESSE COLLINGS, J.P., M.P.

WITH 82 ILLUSTRATIONS

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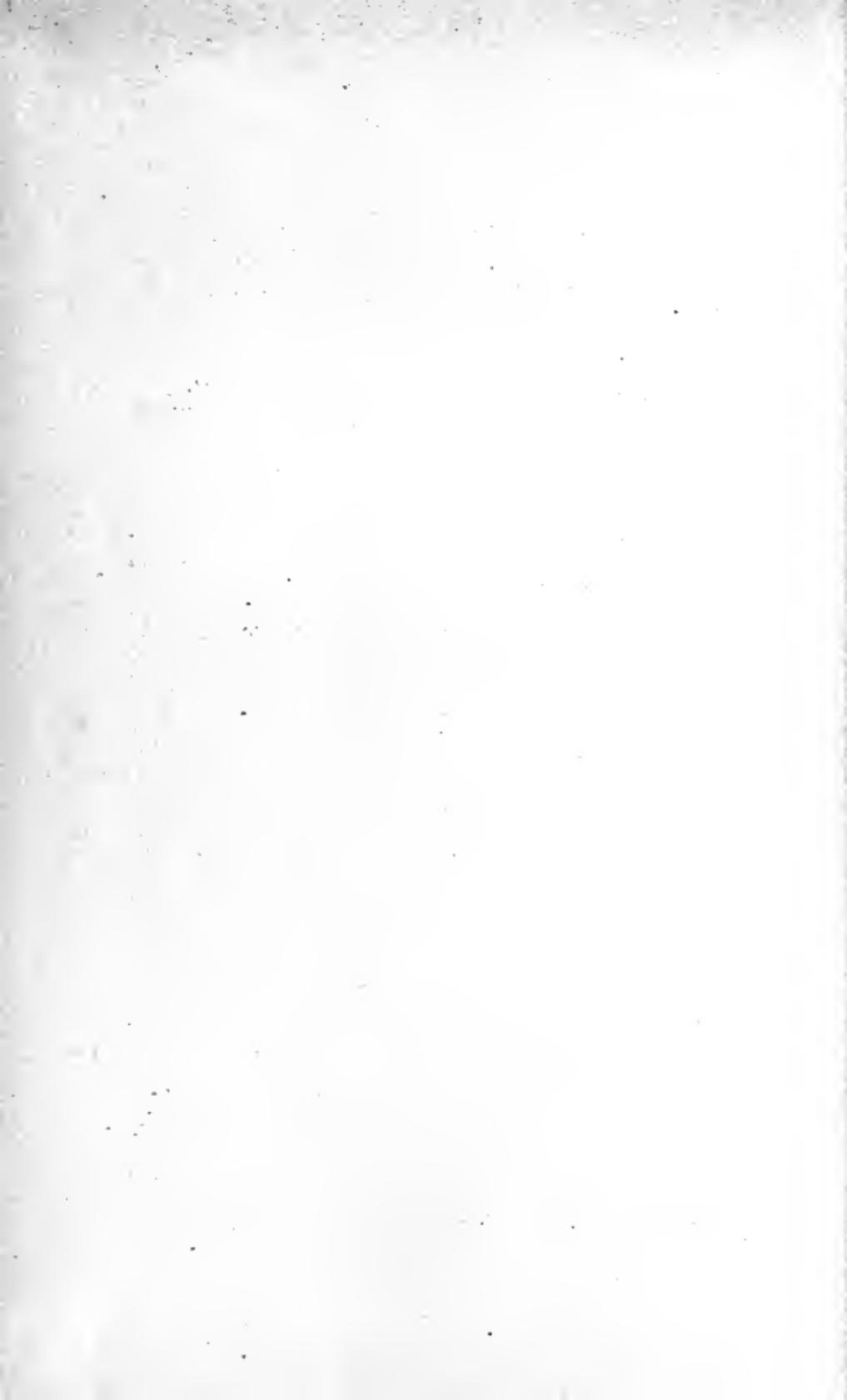
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INTRODUCTION

IN the following pages attention is drawn to the desirability of establishing village industries in Great Britain, and a scheme is outlined for promoting that object. Mr. J. L. Green, the author, suggests that an Association should be formed to carry out the work. A new organisation, however, is not required, as fortunately there is one already to hand, of which he himself is Secretary, and which is more suitable to do the work than any other which exists.

The Rural League—the organisation in question—has for its object the promotion of all schemes tending to further the prosperity of the rural population, and especially that of the rural labourers. The Committee of the League recognise that the work under notice falls distinctly within their programme ; and they have expressed their willingness to undertake it. Accordingly, at their meeting on February 16th, 1915, they passed a resolution to that effect and approved of a scheme for carrying on the work.

Those who, like myself, have visited the rural districts of Germany and Austria (especially the Austrian Tyrol) must have seen how generally

the peasantry are occupied in their homes, during their leisure hours, with handicrafts of various kinds, and have noted the artistic skill and invention shown in the articles there produced. We import, chiefly from Germany and Austria, toys, wood-carving, embroidery, metal and leather work, baskets and other articles to the value of many millions sterling, the whole of which could readily be made in our own country and in the workers' homes. This is shown by the fact that, in several localities, small societies of workers have been already formed under the auspices of ladies who are interested in the movement, the work produced being most satisfactory and encouraging.

I have before me samples of the articles made by men, women and children in different British villages. They show remarkable skill, dexterity and taste on the part of the workers, who only need to be organised to secure the object in view—a commercial market for their output. The articles made are at least equal in every way to those we import, and can be produced as cheaply. During the later autumn months and the long nights of winter, when cultivation of the land is practically at a standstill, the labouring population have leisure and could be employed on work at which they show themselves so apt—thereby adding to their income, improving their condition, and at the same time benefiting agriculture by remaining in close association with the land. It seems to me

that the present is an opportune time to make a serious and general movement in the direction named.

Indirectly, several charitable institutions would be benefited through the agency of the League. For instance, the "Cripples' Union," established in different urban centres, has for its objects the relief of the sufferings of crippled children, the brightening of their lives, and the making of the cripples useful. These children already produce a number of small articles. The deftness of their fingers and their personal taste and skill are seen in the beauty and variety of the artificial flowers which they manufacture. The movement of the League would provide a sale for the output of these institutions and thereby materially help them.

The Committee of the Rural League propose to have a showroom in London containing samples of the goods made in the different villages, which the wholesale traders could inspect and afterwards, it is hoped, sell. It is not intended that the League should be in any sense traders for profit ; they will form a medium between the village producers on the one hand and the urban traders on the other, and much encouragement to undertake the task has already been received.

Under the direction of the Committee of the Rural League, Mr. J. L. Green, the writer of the following pages, will superintend the work in connection with this new movement. There is

no one who is more closely in touch with the rural labouring population than Mr. Green. He knows their feelings, methods and prejudices ; and, moreover, he has the deepest sympathy with their wants and a keen desire to better their condition in every possible way.

The initial outlay of providing showroom samples, etc., would be considerable, but after that it is confidently anticipated that the movement will be self-supporting. To defray these first expenses the Government might be fairly asked for a grant from the Development Fund. Section I. of the Development Act of 1909 authorises the commissioners to make grants for undertakings "calculated to promote the economic development of the United Kingdom." The undertaking in question seems clearly to come within that description. Appeals also for support should, I think, be made to the general public for the same purpose, and no doubt they would receive a willing response.

JESSE COLLINGS.

EDGBASTON, BIRMINGHAM,
February, 1915.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

A NATIONAL OBLIGATION

CHAPTER I

AGRICULTURE AND HOME HANDICRAFTS

THREE is not a county in Britain to-day the agricultural condition of which is satisfactory. No doubt prosperity smiles somewhat just now upon farmers as a class, and the labourers are earning more than ever before; but these facts form no sufficient indication that the assertion at the commencement of this chapter is inaccurate or misleading. If our agricultural condition were satisfactory we should, amongst other things, witness the profitable production of an enormous amount more food; and our land to a considerably greater extent than now would be under tillage, and give a vast amount more employment of a better-paid kind.

CENSUS FIGURES.

Consider a few figures, and only a few, out of the mass which have been issued from time to

time bearing on this subject ; all of which tell the same tale. The official records for 1884 show that in that year 13,570,247 acres were under arable cultivation in England and Wales ; whilst in 1914 there were only 10,998,180 acres, or a decrease of 2,572,067 acres. The case we are presenting could be strengthened by citing earlier statistics. During the same period, the area under permanent grass increased from 14,083,801 acres to 16,115,730 acres, or an increase of 2,031,929 acres ; while the number of live stock decreased from 27,869,003 head to 27,018,830 head, or a difference of 850,173. It should be remembered that more men per acre are employed on arable than on pasture land—at least five more to every 200 acres being employed on the former than on the latter—so that the conversion of tilled land to permanent pasture has thrown a considerable number of men out of work, and at the same time has seriously reduced the production of corn and other food.

The effect of these changes upon the population is revealed in the census returns. In 1851 there were 1,904,678 labourers, farmers, etc. (males), engaged in agriculture in England and Wales ; whilst in 1861 the number had dropped to 1,803,049 ; in 1871 to 1,423,854 ; in 1881 to 1,199,827 ; in 1891 to 1,099,572 ; in 1901 to

988,340 ; until, in 1911, it had got down to 971,708, a loss in the sixty years under review of 932,970 men, or almost half the number of people engaged on the land in 1851. These census figures may for practical purposes be accepted as accurate ; although for comparative purposes there have been here and there slight discrepancies due to revised classifications made by the census authorities.

The census figures, moreover, become more significant when the percentage of persons (male and female) occupied in agriculture in England and Wales is compared with similar figures in other countries. It will be seen from the following table that if the real wealth of a country consists—as in our opinion it does—of a numerous agricultural population, England and Wales are certainly not in a very satisfactory position :—

COUNTRY.	Number of persons occupied in Agriculture.	Percentage of such persons to total occupied population.
England and Wales . .	1,061,836 ..	15·3
Ireland	871,989 ..	44·7
Austria	8,205,574 ..	60·9
Belgium	697,372 ..	22·7
Bulgaria	1,739,181 ..	82·6
Denmark	530,689 ..	48·2
France	8,843,761 ..	42·7
Germany	9,883,257 ..	35·2

COUNTRY.	Number of persons occupied in Agriculture.	Percentage of such persons to total occupied population.
Holland	592,774	30·7
Hungary	6,055,390	69·7
Italy	9,666,467	59·4
Russia	8,245,287	58·3
Switzerland	481,649	30·9

Curiously enough, whilst our agricultural population has declined, in the last decennial period the total "rural" population increased from 7,469,488 to 7,907,556. An analysis of these particular figures, however, reveals the fact that there has been really little or no change in the situation, either as regards the purely agricultural or as regards the "rural" population. For example, when the census of 1901 was taken, very many farmers' sons and agricultural labourers were absent in South Africa, where they were engaged in the Boer War; but all those who returned were included in the census of 1911. Moreover, the growth of industries in the larger towns of the "agricultural" counties and the expansion of the outer districts of towns purely residential in character have added to the "rural" population; although neither can properly be associated with the agricultural movement, whilst the latter increase is merely an en-

croachment which, whatever its advantage to suburban people, cannot properly be regarded as increasing the "agricultural" population.

PALLIATIVES.

Various half-hearted legislative attempts have been made to correct the growing inequalities between urban and rural life, but they have proved little more than palliatives, and have in no serious sense ameliorated the condition of affairs to which we are referring. In the last thirty years quite sixty Acts of a distinctively rural character have been passed by Parliament, of which fourteen have related directly or chiefly to the country workers.

It was, for instance, especially hoped that the Acts relating to the provision of allotments and small holdings would restore rural life to a healthier condition ; but, useful as these measures have been, they have not fulfilled the expectations of their advocates as regards the agricultural labourers ; they have been, in fact, mere drops of oil in an ocean of troubled waters. The number of agricultural holdings in England and Wales, for example, before the passing of the Small Holdings Act in 1907 was 432,111. It was 435,677 at the end of 1913, or a net increase of only 3566 ; whilst only some 30 per cent of those

who have secured holdings under the Act are, or were, labourers at all.

The results of the Act, even under the spur of a number of Commissioners specially appointed to facilitate its administration, would seem to indicate that the system of creating small holdings is at fault.

The official reports on the administration of the Act have more than once indicated that the majority of the applicants for land under it "merely require accommodation land as an adjunct to their present business," and they have also indicated that "the establishment of a large number of statutory small holders will not necessarily be any benefit to the rural population or result, *ipso facto*, in any increase in the produce of the land." When the Government's own officials write in such a pessimistic strain, the public may have doubts concerning the effectiveness of their policy. What is needed is foresight of the most practical sort in any scheme of land reform. So far there has, we regret to say, been a lamentable absence of it. As to small holdings, however, it may be said at once, and with confidence, that not until the "colony" system is adopted does the Small Holdings Act stand any chance of becoming a real and permanent success. To put one or two or half a dozen men on holdings

in one village, a few more in another, and so on, and then to leave them to their own devices is not the policy of a sensible people. It would be much more advantageous for the Board of Agriculture to buy up a few small estates yearly ; to equip them for small holdings purposes ; and then on each to place a colony of small holders, taking care also that they should be assisted in every possible way in education, and organised both for the purchase of the necessary seeds, manures, implements, etc., and for the actual sale of the goods produced. Co-operation is the natural concomitant of the colony system ; and it cannot be adequately applied in the absence of a "colony." If the labourers (as distinct from village tradesmen) are to be benefited, that fact must never be forgotten.

It is not, however, our wish or intention to dwell at any length on our unsatisfactory agricultural position. We merely point out the salient facts (the significance of which must especially appeal to practical reformers), because in our opinion unless the state of things which they show is altered, the scheme relating to village domestic industries outlined in this work is destined to remain, at any rate, much more ineffective than would otherwise be the case. These industries cannot take the place of agricul-

ture as an employment agency for the revivification of rural life ; but they are, or should be, a most useful addition to it ; and to the extent to which more people are placed upon the land—whether as agricultural labourers or small holders—to that extent will the success of the movement for home handicrafts and village industries be increased.

DECAY OF LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

Now, let us here say that if agriculture as an industry has decayed, it is equally true to assert that the various local industries dependent upon or closely connected with it have followed suit. Our enquiries on this point, extending over every county, show an appalling state of things. There was a time when local districts of even very small areas were entirely or almost entirely self-contained in the matter of their requirements. Although this has been radically changed and will never return, it may be doubted whether commensurate comfort and happiness in the villages have followed the change.

It is frequently said that the agricultural workers, to whom these subsidiary industries should be of great importance, are being driven from the land ; but it would be much more true to say that they are enticed from it by the too

often false or evanescent attractions of the towns, and, as Mr. Jesse Collings, M.P., has so plainly and recently shown,* by the often unscrupulous touting systems of overseas and home agents. So far as the towns are concerned, these are supposed to—and they do generally—afford higher wages to the migrant agricultural labourer ; but our contention is that the migration and the emigration are altogether overdone ; that if we were wise, we should take some more effective steps than hitherto to stay them ; and that the establishment of village home industries and the decentralisation of many urban industries—encouraged, as we hope, by the Imperial and Local authorities—would do much to help matters. We claim that this last would greatly help the land workers economically, morally, and physically ; would do much in these directions also for those townsmen whose activities became carried on amid rural surroundings ; and would lift agriculture itself to an altogether higher and more important plane by associating with it in every county a much larger number of people, many of whom at present know little and often care less about it.

* See *Colonization of Rural Britain* (2 vols.), by the Right Honble. Jesse Collings, M.P. (The Rural World Publishing Co., Ltd., 110 Strand, London, W.C.)

TYPICAL INSTANCES.

Perhaps we may at this point give the results of some of our enquiries concerning the decay of industries in the counties.

For example, in Berkshire, near Newbury, velvets, ribbons, and clothing used to be manufactured on quite an important scale ; at Blewbury and Cholsey there were several bell foundries ; hurdle-making in other parts gave considerable employment ; and spinning and weaving were formerly extensively carried on in and around Reading. In Buckinghamshire lace-making and straw-plaiting were common home employments (as well as in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and certain other counties) ; and needle-making was a profitable industry to the working men at Long Crendon. In Cheshire silk-weaving by hand-power formerly largely existed at Cheadle, Hulme, Woodford, and districts near Macclesfield ; and fustian cutting at Lymm. In Cumberland there was much weaving as well as pencil-making. In Devon, at Chudleigh, there was a profitable cloth factory, and Axminster used to be more noted than it is for its excellent carpets. At Torrington there was a first-class woollen factory, and gloving also was much more common ; Crediton was one of the principal places in

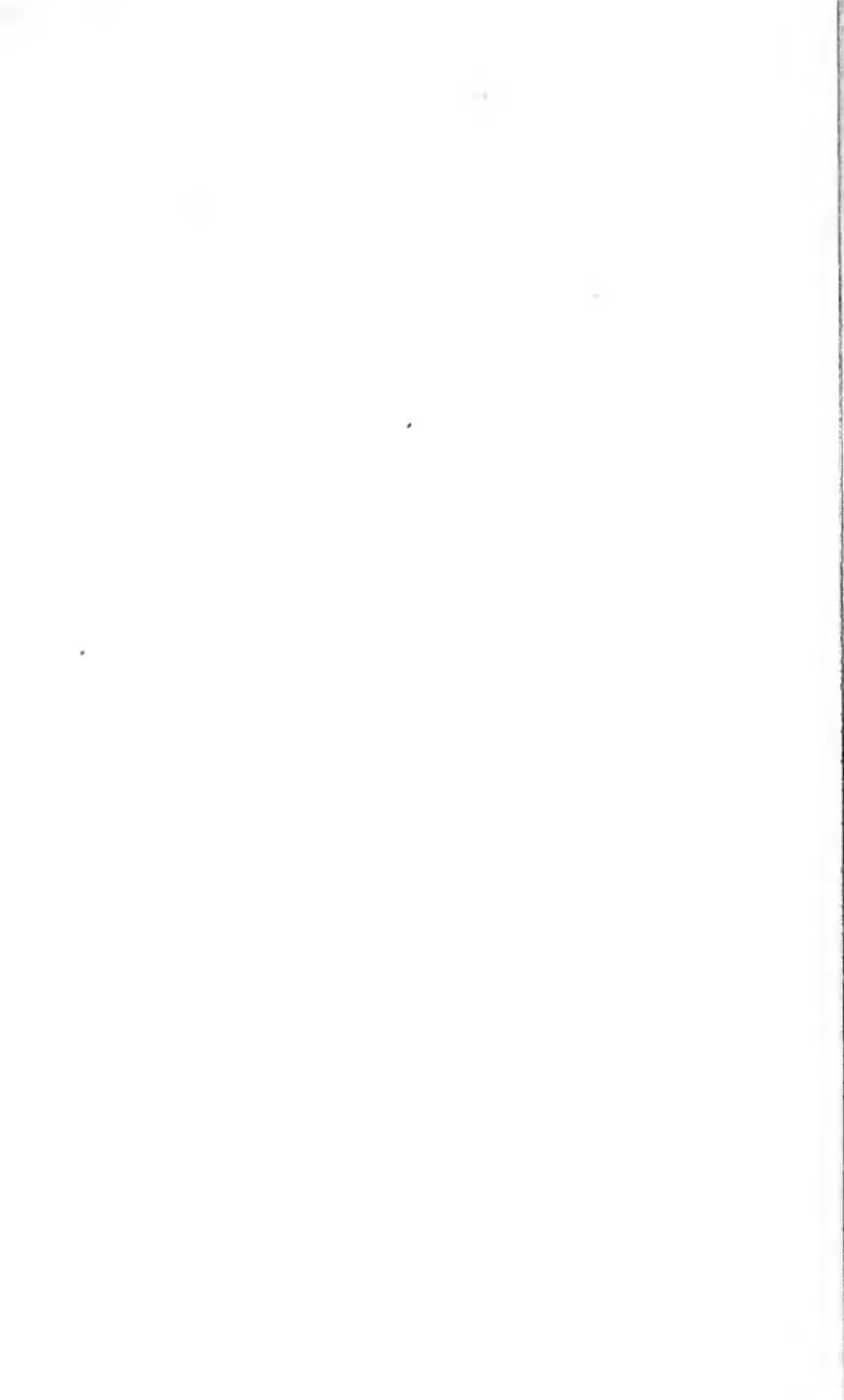
the West for cloth manufacture ; and Honiton was famous for its excellent home-made lace. In Dorset, Blandford and district were very celebrated for their thread, buttons (worked by hand on to a ring of brass wire), and lace. Excellent net - braiding, broadcloth, "sail" cloth and pottery were made at Beaminster. Gloving was common at Cerne Abbas, and a woman could easily earn 4s. or more weekly. This place, not long ago a busy little town, is now a woe-begone village. In Essex there was, at Old Brentford, a considerable industry in basket making ; at Colchester and in the villages around, where the Flemings introduced the bays and says trade, were numerous "bay" mills ; at Dedham baize and worsted were made ; at Braintree and district were straw plaiting and silk weaving ; at Coggeshall, etc., there used to be a good deal of employment in making silk and woollen goods ; and Stratford was famous for its shoes, stays, and small silken goods. In Gloucestershire, at Lechlade, Minchinhampton, Wotton-under-Edge, Cam, Painswick, Rodborough, and Uley the cloth industry used to flourish ; at Almondsbury, Bisley, and elsewhere weaving was common ; wool stapling from the Cotswold sheep made Northleach and the places around very prosperous ; pin making and herb distilling were

industries at Bitton. Frampton, Winterbourne, Cotterell, and Westerleigh were noted for the production of hats and felt ; and Tewkesbury was famous for its hosiery manufacture. In Hampshire the watch-spring or chain industry, long existent at Christchurch, has almost ceased ; at Romsey, the clothing trade was once of much importance, as also silk weaving ; hurdles, brooms, etc., used to be much carried on by the rural labourers in the forest districts of the east and south-west of the county, and in the other wooded districts ; and an old resident of the county assures us that there was considerable industry “in the manufacture of cloth of various kinds, all the towns and most of the villages having their looms and weavers, fullers, etc.” In Herefordshire, apart from industries carried on in many parts similar to some of those already named, nail making was a source of much employment in and around Ross. In Kent, weaving and knitting were in “full swing” at one time in the Cranbrook district ; and Tunbridge was famous for its wood turning. In Lancashire, home industries existed to a considerable extent, such as weaving cotton goods, silk weaving, hat making, file making, watch making, etc. In Leicestershire, where hand-framework knitting engaged large numbers of the village people, the

RURAL TOY WORK



STUFFED TOYS: MADE IN SHROPSHIRE.



work has greatly decayed ; stocking making was a home industry at Market Bosworth, Lutterworth, and the adjoining localities ; hosiery work used to give profitable employment as a home industry at Hinckley and neighbourhood, hand frames being used ; gloves were made in very many parts ; wickerwork was a considerable trade at Castle Donington ; and cap making at Enderby. In Norfolk linen weaving and cloth making were home industries in and around Diss and in many other towns and villages ; and Norwich was, of course, once a particularly famous manufacturing and trading centre in clothing materials. In Northamptonshire, silk weaving, stay making, and lace making afforded much employment at Kettering and in the district ; lace making gave employment in and around Raunds and many other parts ; mat, glove, breeches, and parchment making at Earls Barton ; and basket making in the villages around Daventry.

DECAY GENERAL.

The instances of decayed industries in the counties named are but a very few of those received from a large number of correspondents in those counties ; but exactly the same thing has occurred in every other county. The decay has been general.

Now, we do not wish it to be supposed that we can ever revive all the extinct or nearly extinct rural industries, whether of the home or factory order, or that it would be even wise to do so if we could ; but we do assert, without any fear of well-informed contradiction, on the one hand, that there is an enormous field in which to introduce and establish many of the domestic crafts, and, on the other hand, that the nation would be very much better if we took to the small country towns and villages many of our urban factories, or branches thereof.

The revival or introduction in our villages of some of the domestic industries—with which point we are mainly concerned—would add considerably to the resources of the agricultural labouring population, whose present livelihood is of a slender character ; and this would also apply to small holders and small traders as well as to the ordinary wage-earning labourers.

FINANCIAL IMPORTANCE.

We are now paying continental people something like ten million sterling per annum for articles made mostly in villages, most or all of which articles could be made in our country. We received, in 1913, baskets and basket ware of the value of £228,891 ; buttons and studs of the

value of £913,389, principally from Germany ; hand-worked embroidery and needlework of the value of £20,693 ; fancy goods of the value of £1,099,937, principally from Germany ; artificial flowers of the value of £832,417 ; mats and matting of the value of £148,701 ; brass, bronze, and lacquered metal goods of the value of £367,233, principally from Germany ; toys and games of the value of £1,450,814, principally from Germany ; chip boxes of the value of £44,097 ; etc. etc.

The average village family, whether the bread-winner is a paid labourer or a small holder, have the time, but not the opportunity, to supply the demand for these and other small articles. In the spring and summer they are fully occupied on the land, but in the autumn and winter they have idle hours almost every day, which (in too many cases) they cannot even occupy in any form of healthy recreation, to say nothing of remunerative industry. At these times they would gladly, eagerly, avail themselves of a chance to engage in pleasurable and profitable employment around the family hearth or in a workshop. The work would interest and not tire them ; and unsuspected talent would be released and cultivated. There is not the faintest reason for supposing that this auxiliary occupa-

tion would interfere with their ordinary work ; but there is reason to believe that the workers would profit by it, financially and otherwise. More than one case has occurred in which men who have lost their chief employment have been able temporarily to support themselves and their families by their earnings at supplementary work of this character ; but those are cases the utility of which is not capable of general and continued application. The object rather is to enable the labourer and his family to make use of their very many spare hours in some form of profitable and even ennobling industry ; *and to connect that industry with the movement for the colonisation of our rural districts.* With the allied movements in operation, the spirit of independence and wholesome pride essential to the healthy development of human character would be fostered and sustained to the great benefit of our people.



CHAPTER II

WHAT THE LABOURERS THEMSELVES THINK

WHAT do the labourers themselves think of the proposal to revive domestic industries? They are the people who will profit mainly by it, and it may be thought that it would be idle to initiate the movement without having some assurance that they would loyally and thankfully support it.

For the last thirty years we have been in particularly close touch with the labourers of our villages, and we believe we know their views on this and kindred rural topics fairly well. However, we lately interviewed a number of villagers; and the following brief sketches, which are the result, indicate, in our view, what the labourers as a class feel on this subject.

“IF HE COULD ONLY DO A BIT OF BASKET MAKING,
OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.”

I.—Dusk was slowly enveloping the earth when we made our first unannounced call at a cottage in a village situate at least two miles from

the nearest railway. The cottage was occupied by an old man and his wife, and the former had already gone to bed. His wife went to him, and on her return we were invited to his bedroom.

Some winding stone steps led into a low-pitched room where a lodger used to sleep, and beyond that was another room, equally low and oppressive, faintly lit by a candle. Two beds at right angle, a chair, and a chest of drawers, occupied almost all the floor space ; and on one of the beds lay the old man, with his wearing apparel piled on the coverlet to give him extra warmth.

His is a story of fidelity common enough in rural England, but inconspicuously recorded in the annals of the race. As soon as he could work he was employed on a farm. In due course, he took unto himself a wife, and notwithstanding that his cash wages were never more than 11s. a week, with the aid of generous perquisites he lived happily and comfortably well into middle age. Then his employer died, and the first signs of the malady that was to wreck his own usefulness made their appearance. His earnings declined with the progress of his malady, and now he is permanently disabled in his lower limbs, but sound and hearty internally.

“ If he cud only do a bit o’ basket making or

anything like that," said his wife, "'twouldn't be so bad. He can eat and drink as hearty as anybody, and he can use his hands, but he can't gid about."

"Wull, I be cheerful," exclaimed the old man ; "tidden no good to worry. I d' clean the neighbours' knives and boots, and I wish I had more to do."

"How I've a-managed, I doan't know," continued his wife. "He've a-never gied I more'n ten shullins a week, and he always kept a shullin for hisself. Sometimes he paid his club and sometimes he didden."

"Be that as it may," interrupted the old man, "a better master and mistress than I had no man could have, and if I can't do anything now it's as much my fault as theirs."

It was a curious and pathetic scene. An old man and his wife reviewing a life no broader than the room in which they slept, and whose brood were scattered over the face of the earth. There they were, one sitting and one lying, talking gently of their troubles, and lamenting only the one fact that they had never been taught some kind of light home work. They will pass to their graves with quiet resignation, and probably the last thoughts of the old man will take the form of a wish that he could have done something use-

ful when his lower limbs failed to render him the service of locomotion.

“IT WOULD BE A GODSEND.”

II.—A shy, rosy-faced, neatly dressed girl answered the enquiry for “Father.”

“Please, sir,” she said, as if in excuse for her father’s absence, “er idden come woäm yet.”

We stood on the threshold of a room dimly lit from the doorway; and as the girl spoke, her mother emerged from an inner room. It was Saturday evening, and “Father” seldom got home before five o’clock, as he worked on a distant farm.

About the mother clustered three or four children of ages ranging from about two to ten years, and in her arms reclined a baby who expressed in its eyes the amazement of the whole family at this unwonted intrusion upon their quietness. They looked healthy and well—all except the mother, whose burden was evidently a sore tax on her strength.

We were invited into the inner room to await the arrival of “Father.” It was a broad, large room, with an old-fashioned fireplace. In the centre stood a deal table, one or two rough mats were on the floor, a few chairs stood around the room, and a few almanacs were hung on the walls.

On the table stood no less than eight loaves, and the apartment was spotlessly clean.

“Father” was a splendid-looking man. His face was aglow with a rich colour, save that part which was darkened with a stubbly beard ; his eyes gleamed steadily ; and his bare neck was broad, deep, and muscular. That man, on the prow of a vessel, wearing a shimmering helmet and bearing sword and shield, would have made a handsome Viking.

We fell to talking about his work, his family anxieties, and opportunities that had never knocked at his door. His wages were 14s. a week and not many perquisites. His employer was once a labourer himself ; but he was no more thoughtful of his men’s welfare and not as generous as many who have had no personal experiences whatever of a labourer’s life. His family had increased beyond his capacity to support them properly, and only by prodigious sacrifice and occasional gifts could they be provided with the necessities of life.

We discussed the value of home industries.

“If only,” he said, “something like that could be done for us labourers, it would be a godsend. We’ve got no spare time in the spring or the summer, but when the crops are harvested and during the winter, we have many an idle hour ;

and sometimes we go to bed to save the burning of coal and oil ! They should teach the children in the schools, and they should teach the young folk who've left school, how to make themselves more useful. Here am I night after night with little or nothing to do, and here's my daughter just left school wanting work. I s'pose she'll go out to service. A year or so ago Harry — started teaching some things here ; but they used to have fine goings on with him, and he stopped teaching. He couldn't discipline the youngsters ; they knew him too well. If it had been a stranger, or somebody belonging to squire or parson, it would have been all right ; but it isn't much good to put anybody from ourselves over us, because we shouldn't heed him much.

“ What I should like to know,” he proceeded, “ is why our people should want to buy these things from foreigners instead of from us poor folk ? We want the money badly ; and I'll be bound there would be no lack of workers if there was work to do. A few extra shillings a week would make a power of difference to me and mine ; and there be a good many more like us.”

Darkness had closed in by the time our interview had ended ; and with thoughtful courtesy, the labourer brought out his lamp to enable us

to cross the rough path leading from his cottage to the high road.

“GIVE US A CHANCE; WE’LL SHOW YOU WE CAN WORK.”

III.—We met the next worker on the top of a steep hill, commanding on each side a wide and restful view of luscious pastures, across which the sound of bells from distant towers travelled like enchanted melody.

He was stocky, muscular, well-groomed, and prosperous-looking—all on a wage of 15s. a week with a cottage!

His cottage was built on one side of the hill, and contained as much welcome and comfort as a mansion.

He was not exactly an agricultural labourer, but a groom-gardener, whose chief complaint in life is that his duties are not sufficiently defined, with the consequence that he finds himself called upon to do many domestic jobs that offend his dignity. With it all he is eternally happy, blessed with a buoyancy of mind on which trouble bobs like cork on water.

He had known better times. In his garden was a pigsty, and the stone flags and boarded sides were green with moss. Elsewhere was a

building that used to accommodate a flock of poultry.

Why were they empty? Who could afford to pay 25s. or 30s. for a pig, keep it for five or six months, and sell it for 9s. 6d. a score? Who could afford to keep fowls whose eggs could only average 9d. a dozen and whose carcases were never worth more than 2s. 6d. apiece?

"I wouldn't have minded," said our informant, "if I could have afforded to hold on for better times; but, when you work year after year for nothing and lose the bit you have, it's discouraging, isn't it?"

"Now," he went on, "if I could have made a bit indoors—I'm handy with tools—I should have had something to start with again when prices got better. Why, I could make a lot of the things they sell in —'s shop. If somebody would lend me the money for proper tools and materials, I believe I could make some things straight off. Look at that bookcase and at that camp stool—I made them." They were, indeed, excellently made. "It's money, you know. My wages are small, and I've got to keep my family so that they won't be a disgrace to master; so there is nothing left to save. You give us a proper chance; we'll show you we can work, and work as well as any foreigner."

His wife, a frail, stooping figure, twisted out of shape in a determined effort to give her children a start in life, pathetically exhibited her thin hands with enlarged and monstrous joints as mute witnesses of her share of the struggle.

“ HERE'S HE : THERE'S NOTHING FOR HIM TO DO
IN HIS SPARE TIME.”

IV.—Father and son were leaning against the pigsty. The latter was married and lived close by his parent. They were co-operative pig-keepers. There are always two pigs in the sty. The son provides the food and feeds and cares for the pigs, and the expense is equally shared by his father.

The father is a cobbler—not be-spectacled and lean, like the average cobbler, but stout and hearty. He works for the local shoemaker, and he earns many an odd shilling by mending his neighbours' boots and shoes.

His son works at a nursery, and has no home employment other than that of looking after the pigs, and he had not made much profit out of them in the last few years. Beneath this man's reserve, there is a strong longing for a career. He is, in a way, better situated than some—he has only one child ; and he admitted that he had managed to “ put by a bit.” It was not enough, however,

to start on the land or to do much else with. Therefore, he would gladly do anything which would enable him to add to his capital and thus hasten the period of the gratification of his ambition—to become a cultivator of the land on his own account. He has, indeed, got his eye on the bit of land he would like to have ; but it is doubtful if he will be able to get it before old age has laid its infirmities on him.

His father listened gravely to our conversation, and nodded approvingly of the policy for restoring handicrafts among the rising rural generation.

“ They’d be all the better for something to do,” he said, in somewhat abrupt tones. “ Keep ‘um out of mischief. I couldn’t have done what I have w’out the few shillings extry I’ve earned at mending boots. Here’s he ” (nodding to his son) “ wants to do something and can’t because there’s nothing for him to do in his spare time.

“ I can mind the time when people wern’t above any kind of honest work. Now some of them think good craftsmanship beneath them. All the same, there be many who would be only too glad to earn something in their spare time, and so much the better for them if they could.”

The old man paused to relight his pipe ; and,

in the interval, his son slowly remarked : " And thass a fact ! "

It would be an easy matter to multiply the foregoing interviews, but they would all lead to the same conclusion, namely, that the village labourer—the wage-earner—wants and is entitled to the opportunity of a career on the land, and that profitable auxiliary occupation would be not only a stepping-stone towards it, but a help in many ways afterwards.

THE WOMEN-FOLK.

We should, however, like to add that we have found the wives of the labourers quite as keen as—and very often even more so than—their husbands for something which they can do and by which the general stock of comfort in their home can be increased ; whilst there are thousands of other women—more delicately nurtured—in the country districts to whom the possibility of earning at home their own living or of increasing their scanty—often " poverty "—incomes naturally appeals. The position of our women-folk—and not of one class in life only—is, in fact, often appalling. Any suggestions which appear likely to aid them in their own brave yet silent struggle for a happier existence should, we venture to

think, be encouraged ; and it is such encouragement we ask for the suggestions contained in this little book. We should remember that the " homes of a nation are its strongest forts " ; but that we cannot have such homes or such forts unless the men and women occupying them are enabled to live contented and happy lives.]

CHAPTER III

SUITABLE WORK

I. Domestic Industry : with Examples

THOSE who will take the trouble to have a critical look at the shops in the nearest market town will be struck by the enormous number of small articles, both of the useful and ornamental kind, which are on sale ; most of which, we repeat, come from foreign sources, and all of which are fairly easily made and well within the capacity of our village people.

LEATHER WORK.

Suppose, for example, simple leather work is the domestic industry fixed upon. Look at a blotter. The making of this presents no difficulty to any average village boy or girl. What applies to this article applies equally to leather letter-cases, writing-cases, music-cases, post-cases or post-bags, brush-cases, strops, collar-cases, and innumerable other articles of which the chief substance is leather. Any little additions re-

quired to any of the above—such as buttons, metal corners, etc.—can be bought in quantities, although in many cases the workers, becoming skilled at more than mere leather work, would make many of these themselves (as required), and the whole being made by hand, would be of greater interest, durability, and profit. A very little knowledge of carpentry adds much to the variety of articles which the worker in leather is enabled to turn out.

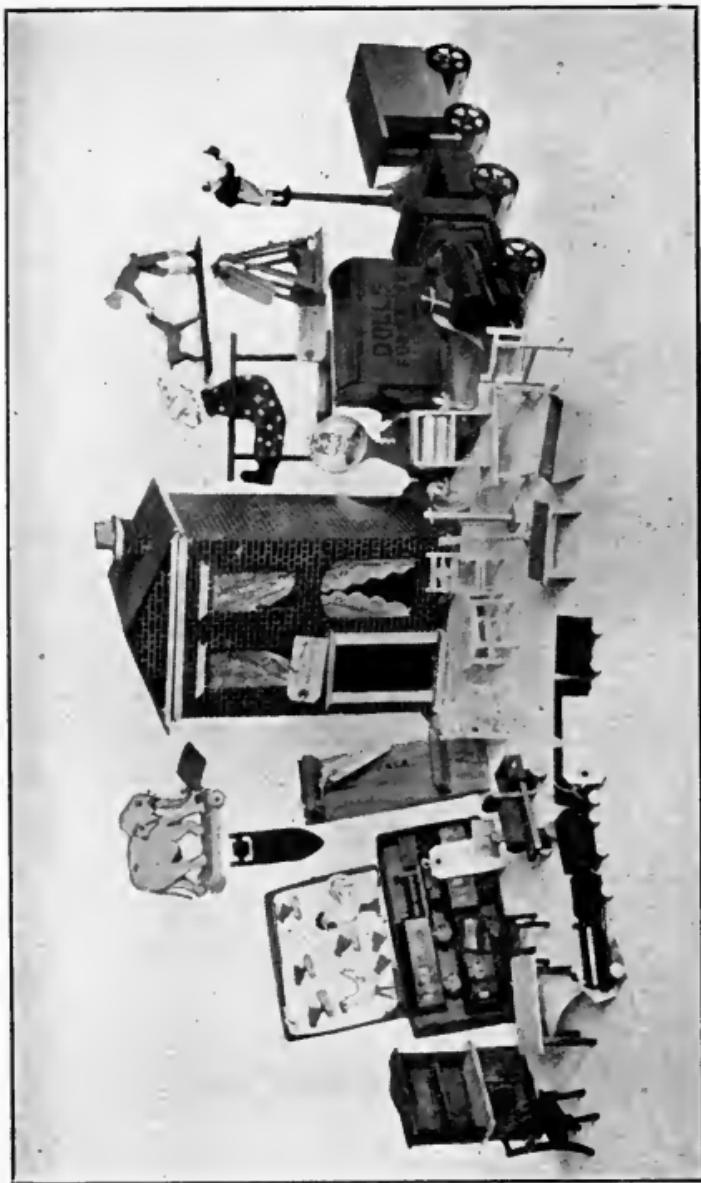
WORK IN METALS.

Innumerable small articles are made from the various base metals ; such articles as letter racks, tidies (for brushes, etc.), photo, etc., frames, fire-screen frames, fire guards, “ waiters,” trays, cake, etc., stands, paper and music racks, gongs, candlesticks, lanterns, toasting-forks, and many others, of some of which illustrations are given.

TOY MAKING.

Toy making, too, to which we further allude in Chapter V as suitable to rural *factory* work, is also to a large extent eminently suitable as a cottage or home industry. Where large numbers of, say, small wooden articles of one pattern are required and are capable of being turned out by machinery, the work can best be done in the

RURAL TOY WORK



WOODEN TOYS: MADE IN VARIOUS PLACES IN ENGLAND

factory ; but, on the other hand, where small goods which are entirely hand-made are required (such, for example, as "stuffed" toys), these can just as well be made by the family of the labourer at his fireside and in the quietude and comfort of his home.

The work of domestic toy making is delightful, much of it is extremely simple or easy to learn, and the whole of it is profitable ; and it goes without saying that by keeping all such work within the confines of our own land, we retain all the financial and other benefits.

A capital illustration of toy making as a domestic industry is that of the workers of the vale of Clwyd, in Wales, where during the last few years many of the men, and later the women and children, took to wood carving and toy making, until now a man can earn up to £1 a week. Mrs. Lloyd George states that "the peasant people are so attracted by the new industry that in several of the Welsh villages classes have been begun to teach the people how toys may be made." The movement is worthy of all support.

Further, at the latter end of October, 1914, owing to the enterprise and enthusiasm of a Shropshire lady, the "Shropshire Toy Industry" was started. Although the workers had everything to

learn, the organisers within seven weeks recorded with satisfaction that the first samples sent out to a firm in a neighbouring town were kept, and an order for more sent on. Nine girls were then working, and others were waiting to join them. The toys are those known as soft or stuffed goods. They include dolls, "golliwogs," "Esquimaux," "Brownies," "Cocks and hens," "ravens," "elephants," upright "black cats," "bull-dogs," "ducks," "rabbits," woolly balls on elastic for babies; and "Highlander cats," "Bo-peep," and "Boy Blue" as calendars. The toys are of various sizes, colourings, and materials, and many of them are jointed. Other specimens are being added.

FRETWORK.

Fretwork is a popular home employment on the part of many urban artisans, but it may also be made a profitable one to whoever chooses to engage in it. It is in no sense difficult. Care is perhaps the chief matter to which to have regard; for if the fret-saw takes a wrong turn, however small, it may and probably will mar the design and article upon which the worker is engaged. It is, however, not a difficulty to take "care."

WOOD CARVING.

Wood carving, almost a lost art in most parts, always gives great pleasure to the worker, and much of it is not difficult of execution, although it appeals rather more to the imagination than do the other industries already alluded to. There is large scope for good work, whether in chip or in relief carving. Nobody can view the ancient carvings without feeling a pang that such a standard of work is not to-day general in our midst. Everybody admires—some almost worship—this antique workmanship ; but few to-day can equal it.

BASKET MAKING

Basket making and raffia work, whether conducted as a domestic or as a factory industry, offers much scope for work. In the five years 1909–1913 the value of the baskets imported into this country increased by £16,196, the total value of the imports in the latter year being £228,891 ; and anomalous though it may seem, during that period the cultivation of the osiers (or withies) used for the manufacture of baskets has also become a more profitable enterprise. In that part of Somerset made historic by King Alfred and the encounters between Roundheads and

Royalists, good pasture land has been broken up in recent years for osiers, and some of the growers pay £5 and £6 an acre for the land on which they grow their withies. In a general way very little labour is required in the cultivation of osiers ; but the stripping of them gives a good deal of employment to the cottagers, many women engaging in the task. The revival which has taken place in the cultivation of osiers may be due to the improved methods in recent years of marketing fruit and vegetables, which have necessitated the use of more baskets, the supply of which from the Continent has not kept pace with the demand. Whether this be the case or not, it is certain that the continental supply in the past has had a marked influence on the basket-making industry in this country, and for that reason it has not in recent years been carried on to anything like the extent that was the case thirty years ago. Apart from the baskets, where osiers are grown wicker chairs, wicker tables, and fancy ware of a more or less useful character are manufactured, some of which require upholstering, and often this is done by widows and other women who have to earn their own living or who want a little money for their personal use. Basket making is really a home industry, and in some districts in recent years a number of classes have been

started for teaching it. There are, for example, classes in Norfolk, Northumberland, Sussex, Suffolk, Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire, etc. The greatest chance of success is to be obtained, of course, in those localities where the osiers necessary for the work can be grown, and if the industry in these places could be better organised, there seems to be no reason why it should not be established on a fairly safe footing.

Of baskets for agricultural and horticultural work the chief are those used for carrying butter to market (which are of oblong shape and have a handle across the middle); those used for carrying eggs to market (which are usually of an oval or round shape with a handle suitably placed); potato and chaff baskets (these being round and deep, with just two small handles at the tops); the well-known strawberry punnets, etc. ; and a very useful form of small oblong basket, made mainly from chips of wood, the basket being deeper at the bottom than at the ends and standing on two small strips of wood of about one inch by two inches running right across the bottom. There is also a convenient wooden handle placed across the middle of the basket, this being about six inches high. This is the trug basket, made almost entirely in Sussex.

A few further remarks concerning the Sussex

trug baskets may be interesting. One of the oldest makers—probably the oldest—is one Puttick, who lives on the outskirts of Boxgrove, a pretty little village lying at the foot of Goodwood Racecourse. He is over eighty years of age, racy of the soil, and carries on his interesting and profitable occupation in conjunction with a little farming, such as the breeding and fattening of a few pigs. Formerly he made long tours in a van about his county, hawking his wares ; and the body of the van may still be seen in his garden, with his name painted on it in large white letters. Our friend—a particularly excellent specimen of rural life—is still as upright as a dart ; and his common-sense remarks, uttered in the delicious tones of Sussex dialect, are always to the point, whilst he himself is respected by all who know him. He has few tools—mainly hammers, planes, mallets, axes, and saws—which, with chunks of willow and hazel bands, lie around him in the performance of his work. The trug baskets are made only of the two materials mentioned ; the willow forming the body and the hazel the framework thereof. He used also to make wooden shovels or scoops, such as the one shown in the illustration, but competition has caused him to drop this branch of his work. However, he not only makes the trug

RURAL BASKET WORK



WOODEN SHOVEL AND SUSSEX "TRUG" BASKET

baskets, but others of many sizes ; from small neat things suitable for a lady's work-table to huge affairs in which a couple of bushels of corn could be carried—thus showing he is by no means a man with a single idea. This is the sort of adaptable talent latent in our village people, which we should like to see developed and encouraged. On the occasion of a recent visit, in explaining his basket business he showed a litter of pigs which, although of four different colours, were "upon my word beauties, and some day will make sweet bacon." This he said laughingly, until, in fact, the tears ran down his eyes—so pleased was he. He was then suddenly called off to show some young fellows how to move away, in the quickest manner, a tree which had been blown across the road. He went off still laughing about his little pigs !

SIMPLE CARPENTRY WORK.

Simple carpentry work and cabinet work—especially where combined with either leather work or fretwork—present opportunities for the production of a very great number of articles of the toy, ornamental, and useful kind.

LACE, EMBROIDERY AND KNITTING.

Hand lace making, embroidery, art needle-work, and knitting ought also to be extended ; it

is in the main slower work, and the public at large is not yet (we hope for better things in this respect) educated up to paying a proper price for a lasting article of good quality. The same remarks apply to the homespun fabrics made by the industrious peasantry in parts of Ireland and Scotland. There will always be a demand for these hand-made laces, embroidered and woollen goods, and if quality and lasting features are taken into account, it should be an increasing one. Great praise is due to those who, in their several ways in recent years, have assisted to create the demand that already exists.

CHAPTER IV

SUITABLE WORK

II. Domestic Industry : Further Examples

IN addition to the remarks in the foregoing chapter, some further actual examples of domestic industries can be given as evidence of what public-spirited individuals have already accomplished in this direction.

MISS RUTH FRY, AT FAILAND.

At Failand, near Bristol, for instance, there is a leather class which owes so much to the efforts of Miss A. Ruth Fry. The class began in a very small way more than twenty years ago, and Miss Fry acted as teacher for thirteen or fourteen years, during which time it grew in number steadily. The members of the class consist of village lads up to men of thirty years of age, many of the latter being gardeners or farm labourers. Failand is a small village, and some of the thirty to forty members of the class attend from neighbouring villages, one man in one season walking some

ninety miles to and from the class-room. The work carried on is embossed and other leather work, and very often it is all done at home. If it should happen that Miss Fry cannot attend the class, it is conducted by the members. The materials, etc., are paid for out of the class funds, and the heating, lighting, and cleaning of the room are given. In a recent year between £70 and £80 worth of goods was sold, and there is ample evidence of the satisfactory effect of the work upon the members of the class.

MRS. LEOPOLD DE ROTHSCHILD AT WING.

At Ascott, Wing, Buckinghamshire, a wood-carving class was started several years ago by Mr. and Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild. A work-room was built on the estate for the use of the class, and a teacher engaged. The work is carried on as an evening occupation for several months of the year. It has been very useful in giving occupation during the long winter evenings, and a small extra income to some of the village people, besides training certain of them for taking up the woodwork trades as a livelihood. Owing to the start given in the class, some of the members have entered the various branches of the decorative trades as draughtsmen and craftsmen. The subjects taught are wood carving and inlay.

RURAL WOOD CARVING



A GRANDFATHER CLOCK CASE

Made at Mrs. L. de Rothschild's class,
Ascott, Wing, Bucks.

The work of the class is principally small furniture, but larger works have also been carried out by the workers.

MISS K. GRACE CHEALS AT FRISKNEY.

At Friskney, Lincolnshire, Miss K. Grace Cheals started a wood-carving and repoussé class about twelve years ago, with the desire to train the boys and young men in the village to useful and artistic work. A room was lent for the purpose, and other help was given to enable the class to be carried on until it could pay its own way, which it has done for some years. Miss Cheals, with a little assistance, gave the necessary instruction, and in due course the members, who mostly belong to the agricultural class, won high honours for their work at exhibitions. In this case metal work has been more profitable than wood carving, and the head metal worker can now choose an excellent design, and turn out a good kerb fender from start to finish unaided. Miss Cheals has aimed at developing the artistic sense of the workers, and their success at the exhibitions is the best witness of fruitful results.

MISS H. E. CRANE IN LANCASHIRE.

Miss H. E. Crane, of Fellside, Grange-over-

Sands, Lancashire—whose energy and interest in home arts is probably still remembered in Manchester, where she conducted classes for boys and girls in the parish under the care of her father, Canon Crane—has met with most gratifying success with needlework classes in the North Lonsdale and Lune Valley districts of Lancashire. Miss Crane commenced her first needlework class in these districts at Grange, and it was attended by eight girls. The movement, however, grew and spread so rapidly that in six years “centres” had to be formed and the number of pupils has increased from eight to until now it is no less than 230. Besides those who attend classes, there are many “isolated” workers—that is, invalids or persons who cannot attend the classes through living too far away from a centre; although many of the pupils walk four miles for a lesson. There is no charge for instruction, and the sessions last from October to April. The subjects taught are embroidery, two kinds of Russian darning, Italian work, Pistoia work, Greek lace, ribbon work, cord making, and darning table linen. The classes are held in school and other parish rooms, and in the houses of friends who are interested in Miss Crane’s efforts. No grants are received from the County Council or any Society. Miss Crane defrays the expenses at exhi-

RURAL WOOD CARVING



A CABINET

Made at Mrs. L. de Rothschild's class, Ascott,
Wing, Bucks.

bitions, etc. The Russian darning and cord making have excited so much interest that they are now being taught even in China and Labrador. At the end of the sessions, Miss Crane generally gives an "At Home," when all the work done during the winter is exhibited, and when each pupil can bring two friends. As there are pupils in about twenty-eight villages and hamlets, it can easily be understood that this gathering is an excellent means of sustaining and spreading interest in the work. Another means of interesting the people of Lancashire in this and other cottage industries arose out of a suggestion made by Miss Crane that there should be an arts and crafts section at the local and county agricultural shows. In 1914, all the prizes in four classes for needlework at the Royal Lancashire Society's Agricultural Show were taken by pupils attending her classes. Miss Crane informs us that "perhaps one cause of the development of the work is that we have few rules and we work for a 'goal.' "

THE MIDLANDS.

Lace making is another industry which has been revived with success in various parts of the country. The Midland Lace Association, for example, gives employment to some two hundred

women, who make pillow lace at their own homes in their spare time; and there are lace-making schools, classes, or industries in Devonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire which have been revived by ladies interested in the welfare of the people.

MISS M. LEITH AT WITLEY.

Spinning and weaving, too, have been revived here and there as an auxiliary occupation. A good example of what may be done by enthusiasm in this direction exists at Witley, one of the beautiful little villages for which Surrey is famous. A few years ago Miss Margaret Leith, one of the youngest lady inhabitants of the village, commenced a weekly spinning and weaving class in a large comfortable room in her garden, and by her example and energy she has managed to get practically the whole village interested in the work.

MRS. WATERHOUSE AT YATTENDON.

Mrs. Waterhouse, of The Court, Yattendon, Berkshire, conducts a successful copper and brass repoussé class. The men and boys, who comprise gardeners, labourers, keepers, grooms, etc., meet once a week at The Court, for instruction, and the number attending the class has

RURAL SPINNING AND WEAVING



AT THE SPINNING WHEEL

ranged from twelve to thirty during the twenty-six years it has been in existence. There are no paid teachers, but nevertheless some creditable work is turned out. A great variety of articles are made, including fenders, coal scuttles, water cans, flower pots, and large and small plates and trays, whilst the members have also made a challenge shield, and tablets with inscriptions for churches. The workers are paid as soon as their work is sold, or as soon after that period as possible. They receive about half the price realised, the other half being spent on the metal, on a carpenter's work in preparing the wood on which the metal is hammered, on a smith's work in construction, rent of shop where the articles are sold, photographs for sending to distant customers, etc.

LADY LEES AT SOUTH LYTCHETT.

Out of small beginnings of the character described, industries have been established which now give regular employment to the workers. One of the most interesting of these industries is to be found at Lytchett Minster, not many miles from Blandford, where centuries ago button making, which was almost entirely confined to Dorset, has been revived.

The Dorset button trade was ruined in about

the year 1851 by the introduction of a patent machine-made button ; and from that time until comparatively recently, button making in Dorset became an almost extinct industry. Then Lady Lees, of South Lytchett Manor, Poole, found an old couple who were able to explain the manufacture of the hand-made button, and with the knowledge she thus obtained, she proceeded to teach the girls and women in Lytchett Minster how to do the work. Now the industry employs about sixteen people regularly, and is entirely self-supporting. If some of those people who talk so glibly about "the idle rich" made as much practical use of their energy as Lady Lees has done, the world would be all the better for it. The industry is now managed by a Mission Sister, who lives in the village. The elder women work at home, but sometimes the girls prefer the comfortable workroom at the Mission House to their own homes for the exercise of their energy. The girls can earn from 16s. to 18s. a week when work is plentiful. Both private and trade orders are executed, and the buttons are sent all over the world. Of course, no attempt is made to compete with the factory production in common use, but a special article is manufactured.

MRS. GIDLEY AT CULLOMPTON, AND OTHERS.

A second example is the old hand-loom weaving industry at Cullompton, which was revived in 1910 by Mrs. Gidley, of Heyford House, Cullompton, with the object of giving employment to soldiers and sailors who had served their service time, and to those physically handicapped or otherwise prevented from earning a livelihood. The industry was financed by Mrs. Gidley, and it has made encouraging progress. It started with five looms, and the number has since been increased, regular employment being given to over thirty workers.

A third example is the spinning and weaving industry at Winterslow, where several men and women are employed in their own homes and in a weaving shed. This industry has established quite an interesting imperial trade, goods being despatched to New Zealand and South Africa. The home work done by the spinners is a great boon to them, and particularly to the women whose husbands happen to get out of work. Broad looms have now replaced the single looms, and many people in the neighbourhood are clothed from the wool of their own sheep, spun and woven in Winterslow.

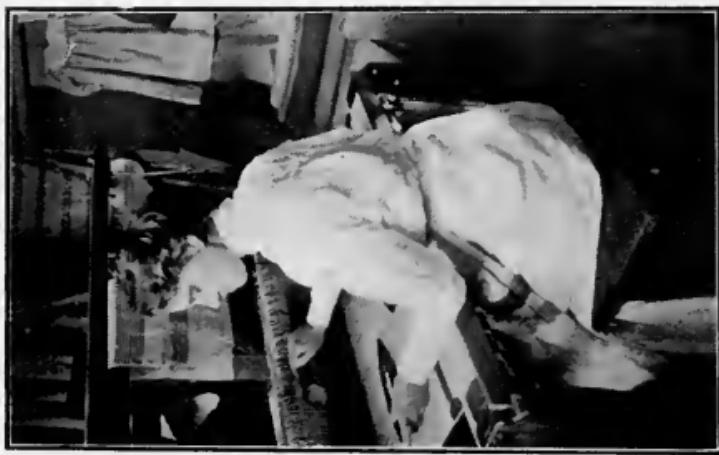
A fourth example is of another spinning and

weaving industry situate at Windermere. The industry, which has been working for more than twenty years, has for its chief objects the revival of spinning and weaving by hand, the teaching of spinning and embroidery to villagers free of all cost to them, and the remunerative employment of women and girls in their spare time. Silks, brocades, samites (gold and other tissues), throwans, woollens, and linens are all woven by hand, and many of them are also spun by hand. The designs of fabrics and of embroideries are original (excepting a few which have been adapted from ancient things), and it is sought to convey to materials the actual colour effects suggested by the beautiful surroundings in which "The Spinnery" is situated. In order the more carefully to carry out this part of the work, a large garden, with beech wood, etc., is now an important part of the industry, where colour schemes can be carefully studied and lights and shadows watched.

MISS GLANVILLE AT BOGNOR.

One of the most encouraging cases, however, of hand-loom work in the home is that of Miss Glanville, of Bognor. Single-handed and without any capital worth mentioning, this young lady has worked up a splendid connection and firmly

RURAL SPINNING AND WEAVING



Miss GLANVILLE AT THE LOOM



A CHILD'S HAND-WOVEN TUNIC

established herself as a professional weaver of considerable ability.

She has explained how she makes the little industry pay. "The art is not a difficult one," she began, "although the loom requires a certain amount of individuality and skill to operate. Any girl or woman of average intelligence can learn sufficient about it in a month, under an experienced teacher, to rely on her own endeavours to complete her knowledge and weave saleable material.

"I was taught," she continued, "at Haslemere, and I have now been a professional weaver for eight years. I began without any capital, unless I must take into calculation the £10 I laid out on a loom, cotton, and a few other essentials. But I had and still have the advantage of living with my parents.

"Well, having bought my loom and cotton, I set to work with much enthusiasm, and it was most encouraging to find there was a demand for hand-woven fabrics, although, of course, they cannot be sold at the prices the machine-made goods cost. They are, however, well worth the few extra pence or shillings, as the case happens to be, for they not only last longer, but are much prettier, as the fabrics are capable of much more artistic treatment than is the case with the

machine-made articles, while they can be designed according to individual taste.

"As fast as I got materials and articles completed, they were bought, and I was soon earning a living. Notwithstanding, I must not give the impression that I found the pathway all a bed of roses, for such was not the case. Here and there were the inevitable thorns.

"For instance, as I became more and more efficient with constant practice, and made materials quicker, I realised I must seek some means of increasing my connection. Hitherto, I had sold for the most part to relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and I was exhausting this list. Then there was growing a pile of unsold things. Make half a dozen things in a week and sell only four of them, and you soon begin to have many on your hands.

"At last it occurred to me to open a little depot in the town. Eventually, to cut a long story short, I was able to come to an arrangement with a friend, who is greatly interested in everything appealing to the artistic sense, to display my wares in his shop, and help me to introduce them to the general public.

"Later I secured the sole use of a room on his premises, and here I have now a second loom. But I still work at home, except on two days a

week, which I pass at the depot, mostly giving lessons (hence the second loom), and save during August and September, when I spend all my time there selling stock made during the winter to visitors to the town, and showing them how hand weaving is done.

“Perhaps it is natural that they should all be most curious, and rarely fail to ask to see me at work.

“Except for the help my friend gives me, in bringing my work to the notice of those who visit his shop, I conduct the industry alone, and I have no doubt there are hundreds of girls capable of conducting similar weaving businesses with the same or greater success.

“It is an ideal home occupation. Indeed, that is one of its chief attractions, for what is grander than, when possible, to work at home and give help and companionship to the old folk, who did so much for us when we were younger? Provided a room of average size can be entirely devoted to it, it can be carried on comfortably in any and every home. But, I think, when it is adopted as a livelihood it is necessary to make some arrangement as I made, and form a depot at a shop.

“As I have tried to intimate, it yields a comfortable living, and the work cannot be said to

be unduly hard and fatiguing. I can also recommend it to those girls who have not occasion to earn a living, but would like to make some pocket-money and spend their dress allowances otherwise than on dress. I can assure them that after becoming quick and efficient workers, they would only have to devote an hour or two daily to their loom to make all their clothes, and many little things that would sell readily, into the bargain. To me the work is tremendously attractive. I love it just, no doubt, as every sincere author and painter loves his or her work. It never palls. It is always interesting, for it allows scope for endless originality. Day after day, almost unconsciously, I find myself planning how I can originate some new shade of colour, and when at the end of the day I look upon my work, I feel that life is truly worth living.

“Perhaps I should add that the girl with little or no artistic temperament and few ideas might take up some other work with more satisfactory financial results. But I believe I am correct in saying such girls are few and far between, for women are naturally artistic, and in matters pertaining thereto, original.

“How greatly hand-woven goods are appreciated you can judge from the fact that recently I have received orders for dress lengths from

India, Paris, America, and other foreign countries.

“In conclusion, I may say I cannot see any reason why the hand loom should not be as common in the home as the sewing machine. It is well known that it is in daily use in the homes of many of the rich, and the poor are foolish not to follow this example of their well-off neighbours, and thus save, if not earn, several pounds during the course of each year.”

No one could assert with truth that the domestic industries referred to in this and the preceding chapter have interfered in the slightest degree with factory production in the urban centres ; and no one could assert that they have been merely the useless hobbies of well-to-do people. They have proved profitable and educative occupations to the villagers, and aroused in them a skill and craft that have added to their pride and social dignity as well as to their material comfort.

Surely this is work that should be encouraged and extended ?

CHAPTER V

SUITABLE WORK

III. The Rural Factory ; and Decentralisation of Industry

ACAREFUL consideration of the subject shows that not only can there be no valid argument against the establishment of factory work in the rural districts, but that the system has already been adopted with success in widely different sections of the country. Its extension is greatly to be desired.

There are many reasons why the system should be extended. Some of these reasons have already been referred to ; but to them we would add that rents, rates, and taxes are lower in rural than urban areas, and that the physical difficulty alleged against the system a few years ago, viz., that it is not so easy in the rural areas to receive, take, or execute orders, really no longer avails. The telegraph and the telephone, and even the postal and railway services, are far more convenient and serviceable than forty, twenty, or (in many cases) even ten years ago.

RURAL JAM AND PICKLE MANUFACTORIES

No doubt it is impracticable to take certain trades to our villages (e.g. ship-building), but we are glad to record that it is becoming more and more recognised by thoughtful business men and others that the transference of other industries to the country parts is both a practicable and profitable proposition.

Curiously, there are still jam and pickle manufactories in our large centres of population, in spite of the fact that it is impossible for anyone to assert with truth that either the jams or the pickles are better—or as good—when made from comparatively stale materials as when made from those freshly gathered from off the land. Everybody knows that a strawberry, a raspberry, or other fruit tastes best—and probably is actually at its best—when consumed fresh from the bush or tree ; and that the longer the period between that event and the conversion of the fruit into jam, etc., the more are lost the natural flavours and essences of the fruit. We are aware that any such arguments may be scouted by urban jam and pickle manufacturers, who will also say that the facilities for the purchase of their raw materials are greater in a large town than those they would possess in a country district. The

latter argument, however, will not hold good in the face of the establishment in recent years of highly successful factories of the same sort in different rural parts of Britain.

RURAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE DRYING.

We should like, therefore, to see urban jam and pickle manufacturers making more and more of their commodities in closer contiguity to our village districts. Let them, in extending their businesses, establish branches in rural areas. And when we allude to jam and pickles, we would also include fruit and vegetable drying (practically an unknown industry in this country, in which there is great financial profit to be made); and such other accessory or subsidiary work now normally carried on in connection with the particular industries under notice. These industries are essentially rural; and it certainly ought to be better for the manufacturer, for the workers, for the retailers, and for the consumers, for them to be carried on in a country rather than in a more or less smoky and congested town area. This would be so, in our opinion, even on financial grounds affecting each of the classes named; whilst it is manifest that it would be also better for the workers on physical, social, and moral grounds.

A NEW RURAL INDUSTRY.

Again, not until comparatively recently had anyone thought that the enormous amount of cider apples wasted annually could be converted into cheap and palatable jam or jelly without any addition of sugar. In the cider counties—as Devonshire, Somerset, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Dorsetshire, and Gloucestershire are called—an enormous quantity of apples are trodden under foot by cattle in the orchards every year or left to be picked up by pigs or to rot.

It is now possible for the cottager, small holder, or large farmer to turn this fruit to yet another and perhaps a better use ; and possibly the artisans of the Midlands and the North will take to the apple jelly even more readily than to cider. Anyway, there is money in both.

As regards this jelly, we have received the following information from our friend Mr. Eldred G. F. Walker, a recognised agricultural authority resident in Somersetshire. Mr. Walker writes :

“ At the outbreak of war there was the possibility of a sugar famine, and also that many thousands of tons of fruit would be allowed to rot on the ground in consequence of the high price of sugar, instead of being converted into jams and jellies. This was particularly the case

with apples, and it became necessary to see whether such an appalling waste of such a wholesome food could not be avoided. The scientific staff at the Long Ashton (Somerset) Research Station undertook this work, and their efforts happily were crowned with success. They discovered a simple way of converting apples into palatable jam or jelly at a cheap cost without the use of any sugar other than that contained in the fruit itself !

“ Numerous analyses had shown that ordinary apple juice varies very much in composition, but that the average amounts of sugars and acids present in apple juices range from 10 to 12 per cent. The sugars consist of cane, grape, and fruit sugars, the latter being predominant as regards quantity, and the acids vary from 0.2 to 0.4 per cent, but there are some apple juices that contain even more. Professor Barker and Mr. O. Groves started on their investigations by grinding up the apples, expressing the juice, and consolidating that juice by means of evaporation ; and they found that by doing so they had increased the sugars from 60 to 72 per cent, and the acids from 1.2 to 2.4 per cent. Of course, in such proportions the sugars were preservative, and the acids were sufficiently strong to act as antiseptics and also as preservatives. This meant that the jelly so

made would, under normal conditions, keep indefinitely. Here, then, was the foundation of a discovery that must have far-reaching effects. Further experiments were carried out, and the matter is now so well worked out that it needs only a commercial venture to establish it as a new and profitable industry.

“The important thing, however, is that it can be carried out in the home as well as in a factory by the use of suitable utensils. As to this, there is nothing better than one of those double-bottomed enamelled saucepans, such as are in use for making porridge. Ordinary iron saucepans are not suitable as the jelly acquires a very dark colour from contact with the iron.

“The cider apples that have been found most suitable for this jelly making are the sweet and bitter-sweet varieties. The juice of the apple is alone required. In small households the apples can be cut and the juice obtained by means of an ordinary lemon-squeezer. The juice must be used fresh, as it is useless if fermentation is allowed to take place. It is well to strain this juice through muslin to clear away any bits of pomace, or foreign matter. The strained juice can then be concentrated over a fire or an oil stove in a double-bottomed saucepan. It is a somewhat slow and tedious process, taking several

hours, as the bulk has to be brought down to about one-sixth of its ordinary quantity. When this has been done the juice may be poured into jars direct, where it will set to a firm jelly in one or two days ; but if it is run through ordinary jelly bags, it will be found to be much brighter and clearer. Some juices, however, are slow-setting.

“ In making this jelly in commercial quantities, it is advisable that the juice be not brought into direct contact with the steam coils used for evaporation, as the latter are very liable to impart a burnt taste.

“ If it is desired to produce a very clear jelly, or if the juice is too bitter, it is recommended that a little gelatine should be added before straining and boiling. The gelatine must be dissolved in a little warm water before being added to the juice, and the quantity used should be about half an ounce to ten gallons of juice. The white of an egg mixed with a little cold water can be used in the place of gelatine, that from one egg being sufficient for one gallon of juice. Blackberry and other fruit jellies can also be made by the addition of the juices of these fruits to the apple juice before concentration.”

The economic value of this discovery is very great. Everyone knows that a small glass of

fruit jelly, purchased at either a grocer's or a confectioner's, costs something like one shilling. Reckoning the value of ordinary cider apples at 30s. per ton—they were much cheaper in 1914—the cost of this home-made apple jelly works out at under 2s. per gallon. It should fairly revolutionise the jam trade, and it will be welcome indeed to the frugal housewife who ordinarily finds jam making a somewhat expensive affair. Where is the firm or individual who will, so to speak, "set the ball rolling"?

RURAL SUGAR MANUFACTURE.

Another industry, of much greater importance, is the growing of sugar beet and the manufacture of the beet into sugar. Hitherto Germany and Austria have been the chief sources of our supply of beet sugar, and the rural people in those countries have profited handsomely by our reliance on them for this article of food. Not only can beet sugar be grown in this country, but the roots are equal or superior in sugar-content to those grown on the Continent. Apart from the greater amount of labour that would be employed—all the year round—in the cultivation of sugar beet and its manufacture into sugar, the residuals form a very fair food for farm stock. It was not until comparatively recently that any

serious attempt was made by financial aid from public sources to place the industry on a business footing in our own country ; although no qualms were ever experienced in granting money from the Imperial Exchequer for tobacco growing, etc., in Ireland, or in guaranteeing a loan for cotton cultivation in the Sudan. Nevertheless beet sugar growing ought in Britain to support quite a number of sugar factories to the general benefit of the country.

RURAL BACON FACTORIES.

Some of these have not been so successful as their advocates hoped, but failures have supplied experience, and there are other successful examples ; whilst the increasing tendency among producers towards a practical form of combination (we put it no higher than that) is a happy augury of still greater success in the future. The whole industry, however, of bacon production needs attention. The public eat bacon in increasing quantities, and there is no sound reason why we should remain compelled to import such large supplies of it.

DECENTRALISATION OF INDUSTRY.

Consider now for a moment occupations other than such essentially rural ones as those just

alluded to. If the visitor to London will cast his view over the district between Willesden Junction and, say, Watford, on the London and North-Western Railway, and contrast that view with one taken by him, say, twenty to thirty years ago, he will have to admit that the rural parts between these two places have been studded here and there with factories and warehouses of almost every conceivable kind. What applies to the locality named applies with equal truth to localities on the other trunk railways with termini in London ; indeed, it also applies to the large towns in the provinces. These "outside" localities were rural in all essential respects twenty to thirty or so years ago. They are now districts from which the "rural" element is fast being squeezed out—a state of things which ought not to be permitted. It ought, in our opinion, to be made compulsory that every rural district into which factories come shall remain largely of that character ; and we say this not without having given the matter serious consideration over a long number of years. We are of opinion, moreover, that unless this element of compulsion is employed—and there is no enactment yet sufficiently stringent for the purpose—it is to a large extent useless to expect that decentralisation of industry which in the long run would prove one

of the nation's greatest and most valuable assets.

A RURAL TOY FACTORY.

Toy manufacture, to which we have already alluded, could also be carried on as a factory industry in the rural parts. The articles are infinite in their variety, and there is unending scope for the inventive talent and manual dexterity of the workers, both young and old. Look at the articles in any shop where toys are sold, and consider if these are above the manufacturing capacity of our village people. No one could or would say they are.

A correspondent living in a small market town in Shropshire, has lately established a toy factory in it. He had been obliged to deal in many foreign-made articles, much against his wish, and ultimately he decided himself to start making wooden toy building blocks. For some two years prior to August, 1914, he had given serious thoughts to the whole subject, but it was not until about the date named that he made real efforts to engage in the business, and then and onward he laid out much money on the necessary and latest machinery and tools. The people employed are women, youths, and mechanics, some of the latter of whom are skilled. The

work is whole-time work: that is to say, the workers do not devote, as in the case of a cottage industry, a part only of their time to it, but all their working hours.

Our correspondent adds: "There are many German goods which might profitably be made by villagers at home. All kinds of carved wood animals (not large ones), etc., could be made. Toy pianos, too, sell at 6d. to 2s. 6d. each; and the outlay on tools for the making of these pianos, which would be an excellent 'line,' would be about £2. Not one is made out of Germany, and about £2,000 worth a year are sold in England. Again, 'Noah's Arks' sell at about the same price, but the turnover is double. On the making, too, of mouth-organs over 5000 workers are employed in Germany; but not one of these instruments is made in England. If you can find £500 capital, make china tea-sets or dolls' heads. The making of walking-sticks is also a suitable rural industry." Finally, he says: "Paper masks and paper soldiers' helmets could easily be made at home. A friend of mine went all over the likely parts of London trying to get helmets made out of cardboard; he offered 7d. each for the helmets, and would have ordered several thousands, but no one would take the work on."

At Burton, too, a Company has recently been formed with the object of making toys. The brewing trade is predominant in this district, but it was pointed out by the projectors of the new industry that there was a large amount of female labour in the locality for which the brewing trade had little demand. A sum of £5,000, we understand, was subscribed towards the formation of the Company, and it is anticipated that a large number of workpeople will be engaged in the work at the factory, with a further number engaged in constructing the parts of the toys in their homes. The movement is a step in the right direction, although it may be pointed out that very many of the toys not of a machine-made character could be produced much more cheaply in the villages by the families of the agricultural labourers; and it is to be hoped that this class around Burton may be included within the scope of the Company's operations, which will be watched with sympathetic interest.

A RURAL LACE-MAKING MACHINE MANUFACTORY.

As another instance of the method in which rural factories may be started, we may cite the case of Mr. Ernest Jardine, M.P. for East Somerset. Mr. Jardine is a large manufacturer of lace-

A RURAL FACTORY



THE RURAL LACE-MACHINE FACTORY OF MR. ERNEST JARDINE, J.P., M.P.,
AT SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET

making machines in Nottingham, and he is of opinion that it is necessary that something should be done for the rural districts. He is therefore not only a supporter and keen advocate of the rural reform movement in and out of Parliament, but for some years he has been giving a very practical illustration of his interest in the movement in his own parliamentary division. For example, apart from several schemes for the general betterment of his constituents (such as the provision of freehold plots of land on a unique plan, the erection of model cottages in different parts of the division, prizes for school gardens, bulb competitions for school-children, prizes for the best kept allotments and cottage gardens, prizes for the best kept apiaries, etc.), he has taken to Shepton Mallet a branch of his Nottingham business.

For this purpose Mr. Jardine acquired some old and disused premises in Shepton Mallet, and then had them converted into a model factory for the manufacture of carriages for lace machines, the factory being equipped for an output of 16,000 carriages a week. A large number of girls and men resident in Shepton Mallet were engaged and trained for the work, which, whilst not of an intricate is at any rate of a delicate character, the carriages having to be made to a scale which

must not vary even by a hair's breadth. Minute care therefore has to be exercised by the workers ; and they are encouraged to sustain it by a bonus system which rewards them for faithful work and which makes them collectively responsible for unfaithful work. It is a testimony to the care of these workers, drawn from the ranks of people more or less dependent on or concerned with agriculture, that they have proved themselves both capable and reliable.

The factory itself is clean from the ground floor to the top storey, and there is abundant evidence within and without it that Mr. Jardine is fully cognisant of the relation between efficient production and the social and material welfare of the producers. There are, for example, on the premises a large recreation room (which is also used for concerts and dramatic and other entertainments), bath-rooms, a spacious and cheerful dining-hall, and a well-furnished and scrupulously clean kitchen, from which the girls may obtain three meals a day at a price per week that would have to be paid for a single meal in the average middle-class restaurant. Outside the factory there is an ornamental lake, on which there are numerous water-fowl, and on which, too, a boat is kept for the free enjoyment of the workers. There is also an asphalted space for recreation,

A RURAL RECREATION GROUND AND ORNAMENTAL WATER



RECREATION GROUND AND ORNAMENTAL WATER

The former is two acres and the latter half an acre in extent. They are used in connection with the Rural Factory at Shepton Mallet, Somerset, established by Mr. Ernest Jardine, J.P., M.P.



and a kitchen-garden, the products of which are served up in the factory dining-room. Free instruction in all manner of domestic and other subjects is provided ; and Mr. Jardine has also erected a number of model cottages with large gardens near the factory.

All this, of course, has added to the general prosperity of Shepton Mallet, which is in the heart of a purely agricultural district ; and it leads to the conclusion that if a branch of industry of this character can be established with success so far distant from the controlling centre as Shepton Mallet is from Nottingham, it ought to be possible for other manufacturers to take a leaf out of Mr. Jardine's valuable book.

RURAL CLOTH, ETC., FACTORIES.

There are several instances of most successful cloth or woollen factories in our English country districts, as distinct from our large urban centres. For instance, from Witney, in Oxfordshire, we still get excellent flannel in the shape of blankets ; from Chipping Norton, in the same county, we obtain cloth of a special and excellent quality ; and woollen materials are also made in some of the rural parts of Westmorland, Wiltshire, Devonshire, and Yorkshire. Small factories, too, where iron, etc., is worked up, mainly for agri-

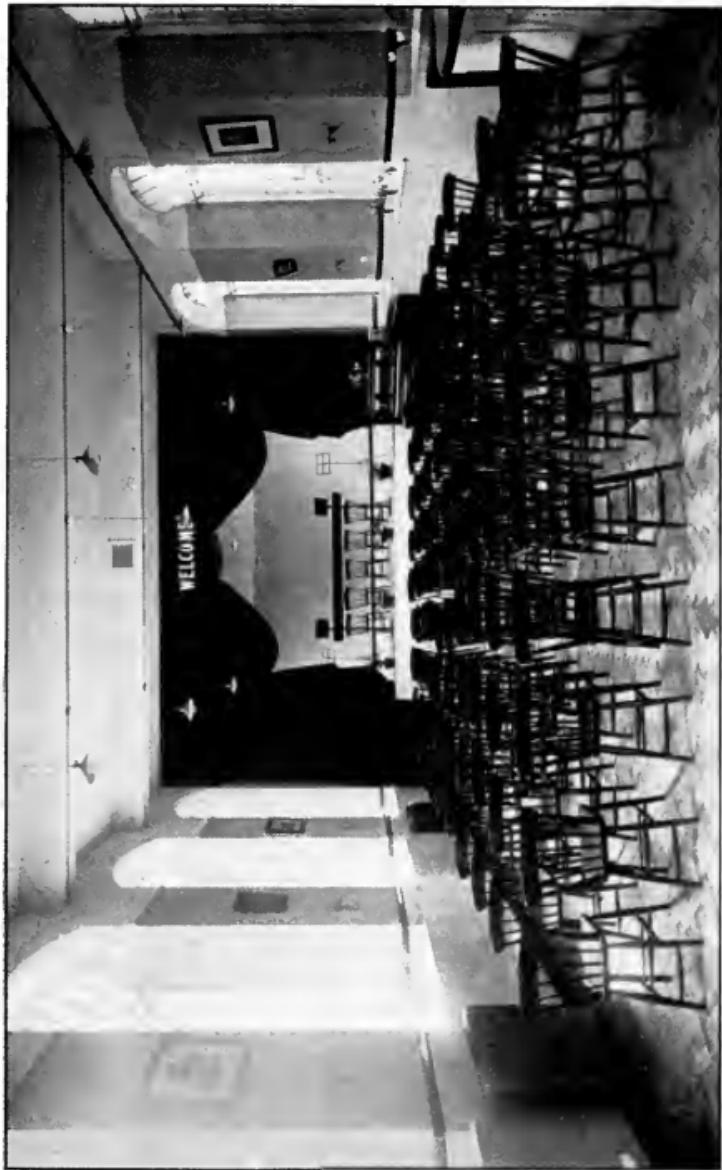
cultural implements and appliances, exist in many parts.

SMALL URBAN TRADES IN ENGLAND.

Many of the very best articles of a domestic character for which Sheffield is famous, such as scissors, pocket knives, etc., are still turned out by the "small" man in his little manufactory, and it is not impossible for this work to be just as well performed in the more rural districts as in the populous industrial centre of Sheffield ; indeed, a very few miles from that important centre factory work is already being carried on amid rural surroundings. The cheaper commodities of the character named are turned out on a large scale by machinery, and therefore probably could not be manufactured with profit by small manufacturers.

In some urban centres, as in Staffordshire, one finds factories, very many of the rooms of which are occupied by independent tradesmen, each of whom pays rent for the room he individually occupies and for the power which goes with it. These workmen or tenants are their own masters. The remainder of the factory or mill is utilised by the mill or factory owner. It might be thought that a system of this sort does not lend itself to transference to a village. In a sense that is true, but at small cost the little manufacturers

A RURAL RECREATION ROOM



This RECREATION ROOM (60 ft. by 25 ft.) is used in connection with the Rural Factory at Shepton Mallet, Somerset, established by Mr. Ernest Jardine, J.P., M.P.

or independent workmen could be installed in a row of cottages or some similar-sized buildings with which water, electric, or other power could be connected, to the advantage of the workers.

In Birmingham and district, where formerly the petty trades were vastly preponderant, we find even to-day a very large number of men who are their own manufacturers, travellers, etc., and who turn out all sorts of the smaller brass, etc., goods. It was in Birmingham that the Building Society movement had its greatest development in its earlier stages; and this was due almost entirely to the fact that the small manufacturers who, somewhat above the status of mere workmen, soon developed resources sufficient to enable them to purchase their homes and the little one or two-storey work-dwellings at the sides or backs thereof. It is a pity that here, as elsewhere, the small factory system became congested into comparatively narrow areas, for it needs no argument to prove that it might just as easily have been spread over a few miles of territory as been confined (so to speak) to a few hundred yards here and there.

WELSH RURAL INDUSTRIES.

In Wales there is a very interesting illustration of the return of what we may term the small

rural factory. We have here an instance of an ordinary industry which, during the course of a century, has advanced from the domestic form, through the various intermediate phases, to large scale manufacture, and, having achieved but scant success in the latter stage, has returned to a more modest scale of production which harmonises with local needs and circumstances, and is attended with a measure of prosperity sufficient to justify not only its continuance, but even its extension. Welshpool was the great marketing centre, first of all, for the sale of their woollen pieces by the small farmers, but in the first half of the nineteenth century Newtown became the centre. About 1850 power looms, with the consequent large factories and the diminution in the numbers of the small factory owners, came on the scene ; and there came about considerable competition with the methods and goods adopted and made in England. Although there are not so many people employed in the Welsh flannel trade in the rural parts of the Principality, all the small manufactories appear to be profitable to the owners, and some have latterly extended their operations. One reason for the survival of the Welsh rural factories is water power. This saves coal and a certain amount of machinery ;

and we have more than once suggested that cheap power of this sort might very well be largely utilised in other parts of the kingdom. Labour and the expense of marketing, too, are cheaper than in more populous places. It must not be inferred, however, that because a worker in a rural factory may get lower wages, he is in reality worse off than the higher paid workers in the larger towns. Amongst other things, his rent is lower, and his expenses are, too. With respect to marketing, the country manufacturers of Wales, particularly of South Wales, are advantageously situated. They cater for a special market, which they find sufficiently near to their doors to attend to personally—thus obviating the necessity for travellers in other parts of the kingdom. Few, if any, of the Welsh rural mills at present suffer from a lack of customers. Although attempts have been made to get the manufacturers to palm off inferior articles on their customers, we are glad to know that there appears to be no sign of yielding to such temptation.¹

There need be—and there is—no insuperable difficulty to the establishment and continuance

¹ For further details as to Welsh rural factories see an interesting article by J. Swain in *The Economic Journal* for Sept., 1914, from which most of the above details regarding Wales are extracted.

of rural factories, whether of what one to-day recognises as the more urban type or of those connected more distinctively or entirely with rural work. The pity is that this system—the decentralisation of industry—is not much more extensive. It offers wide scope to our urban friends ; and we ask them—on patriotic as well as on business grounds—to further it by every reasonable means in their power.

GARDEN CITIES: A CAUTION

There is one method of decentralising industry which in recent years has attracted attention. This is the building of garden cities. For example, at Letchworth, in Hertfordshire, practically a new town, or “city,” has been created ; where there is ample breathing room at present for the residents and where the erection of houses and factories is regulated to prevent the congestion so common to every purely urban industrial centre. The principle has also been applied on the confines of certain populous urban areas and even *within* the areas of some of those centres ; the buildings erected being almost entirely residential in character and admirable in this respect. All these efforts are to the good, and they are likely to remain so as long as the administration is careful to maintain the ample

breathing room principle for which purpose they were called into existence.

A word of caution, however, seems desirable. It should be recognised that the creation of garden cities cannot operate in any general sense towards the decentralisation of industry ; and that such decentralisation can best be brought about—and certainly the most easily—by bringing industry to the villages, so that each may share as far as practicable in its prosperity. We want the existing villages to be more interested in industrial affairs ; and we want our industrial magnates and workers to be more interested in village affairs. We shall then get a more healthy consideration of both local and national questions. The garden city movement cannot, of course, supply this interest in sufficient strength. Moreover, if such decentralisation as we urge were brought about, the value attaching to land would be dispersed far more generally throughout the country ; to the immense advantage of the parish, district, county, and imperial authorities.

The garden city policy, so far as it attracts people from the congested towns, is all to the good ; but, if it attracts to any serious extent agricultural labourers from the villages, it is not a policy which we at any rate can, without some reserve, support : the price is too high. We

strongly urge, therefore, upon those who seek to improve the lot of our agricultural people—whether agricultural labourers, farmers, or owners—that the better policy for the purpose is to bring industry to the villages and not to take the villagers to a distant part, even though it be designated by the attractive title of “city.”

We say this much on the question of garden cities not exactly in the way of criticism, but of caution. We have seen the movement urged in such extravagant terms—e.g. as a “settling of the land question,” and so on—that it should be recognised it has its limits of usefulness as has everything else; and that it is not, and never can, be anything but one of the many aids to the solution of our various national problems—land or otherwise.

CHAPTER VI

HOW TO BEGIN

The Agricultural Labouring Population

LET us consider any average-sized village and deal with the case of the workers there—all wage-earners, except, perhaps, a couple or more of small holders, the latter of whom to-day make but a precarious living. Let us consider how we may start domestic industry amongst them.

How are we to assist these land workers ? Their present rule of life is to get up in the early morning, work all day (except at meal-times), return home at night, and go to bed. The process is repeated year in and year out, and from the period of youth to the time when they quit life's scene. There is little to interest, to amuse, or to profit them ; there is no outlook, no career. Most of the youngsters will migrate or emigrate ; and even though some of those who leave the village are able to and do financially assist the "old folks at home," it is often enough at the expense of their own young families, and to our knowledge many of the old folk would rather die

in the workhouse than be “a drag” (as they term it) on their offspring—a truly noble, yet pathetic feeling.

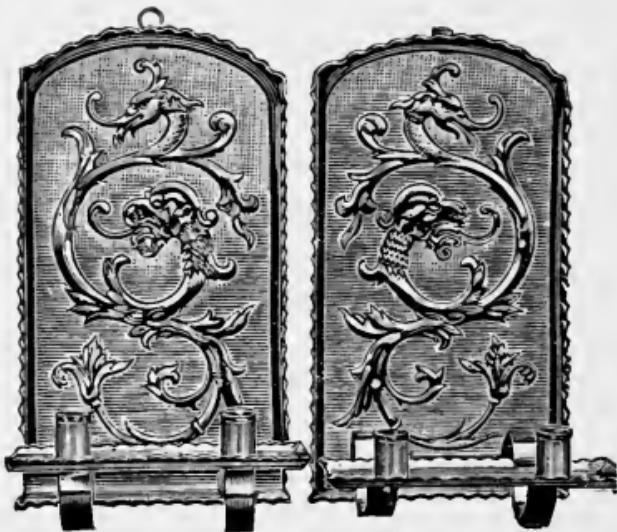
There, however, is the village ; and we want (let us assume) to assist in ameliorating the conditions under which the workers live.

What can be done ?

TALKING TO THE LABOURERS.

In the first place, one should go among the workers and have a talk with them ; or should send round someone presumably as sympathetic and as intent on carrying or assisting to carry through the project. He will call on, say, Jim Robinson, an agricultural labourer ; and it is explained to him that it is desired to add a few shillings a week to the income of his home. He is told what the land workers abroad do : how, by domestic or village industry, they and their children can increase the family income ; and that it is believed Britishers are as capable of doing this as foreigners. He is asked if he is willing for his young folk to give a hand in proving it. Jim is interested. He is further told that it is not desired to interfere with his or his children’s ordinary work ; and he readily understands there is a considerable amount of time which could be better utilised than now by him-

RURAL METAL WORK



A PAIR OF BRASS SCONCES

Done by a boy of ten years of age.

self and one or more of his children. He is asked to think it over. He is seen again in a few days, either on his way to or from work or at his home. He is satisfied. He is willing to fall in and to "see what the village can do."

Then he is asked to talk to his mates on the subject ; and further calls are made on other labourers and their wives.

A SOCIALE MEETING.

It is soon agreed that it would be a good thing to have a little sociable sort of meeting in the schoolroom, in the club, or in some other suitable place. The object now is to have quite a serious talk all together ; with the view of carrying this business through, as there appears to be both money and possibilities in it.

Now, our interested friend who set the ball rolling has asked to attend this meeting one or two at least of the better-to-do village people ; having first of all explained to this new element what is in view and secured their cordial good wishes and co-operation.

Thus far, then, we have got the labourers and the "better-to-do" to agree that the object is a worthy one ; and at this preliminary meeting they decide together that they would like to carry it out. That is almost half the battle.

SOME HANDBOOKS.

The next step is to buy a few cheap handbooks, which can be had at a cost not exceeding 1s. to 1s. 6d. each ; these dealing with various handicrafts, such as wood carving, embossed leather work, fretwork, toy making, bent iron-work, repoussé work, knitting, needlework, etc., etc.

The squire, parson, minister, or other person who had the first talk with "Jim Robinson" will probably get together a few shillings or a pound or two in order to purchase these books and possibly to purchase also a few tools and samples of handicraft work. *The movement, in fact, must somehow begin "from above"* ; although, as we show in Chapter VIII on Finance, we have no right to rely for funds on the individuals above-named. We are sure, however, our better-to-do country people, with their superior education and other advantages, will show all possible interest in their poorer neighbours to-day as they have done, generally speaking, in the past.

The books obtained, they are circulated among the labourers, who are requested to read them carefully. Another little sociable meeting is then called ; perhaps in the parson's or squire's study or dining-room this time. We are getting

more sociable over the business ! At this meeting we are able to ascertain the most suitable or desirable occupation, or occupations, to adopt for the workers, and then how many will agree to learn and to work at the same, and generally we discuss the prospects of success. There has been no expense to the labourers so far ; and we don't want there to be any yet. We want to give them something—and must do so—before we ask them to pay anything from their scanty earnings. They may or may not be asked to return it later from their incomes from the new craft.

A FURTHER MEETING.

Having got the information in question, we are now in a position to ask the labourers to wait until we can call a further meeting, and this may be weeks or even months hence ; as (we tell them) we have got to see about some other highly important things before we can formally launch out into active, and, we hope, profitable work. Of these things, we give them some idea, and of which the reader himself will gather particulars as he proceeds.

THE QUESTION OF INSTRUCTION.

There must be, for example, instruction available for the labourers, or their youngsters. Is

there a daughter of the squire who can do fret-work, bent ironwork, embossed leather, etc.? Can she, in fact, do the craft work decided on? If so (and very many can) she will in all probability be very glad to instruct the villagers therein for an autumn or winter season (once a week or oftener); after which they will have little difficulty in forging ahead for themselves, each bringing out his or her own individuality, or may be genius. The schoolmaster, or the daughter of the parson or other minister, may aid if there be no resident squire, or even if there be. Possibly an artisan from a neighbouring village or town can do so. Failing all these, and possibly in addition to them, the County Council may very well be expected to arrange for an instructor to attend the village once or more a week. In any given county there are many people who would, we feel sure, be only too willing to supply this instruction gratis or upon the payment of expenses alone; but we already have publicly-paid instructors in gardening and agriculture, and there can be no logical reason against extending the principle to other forms of rural work.

The instruction may be given in any available room. In some places it is now given under the hospitable roof of the squire or other person of local importance; and there is an advantage

in this inasmuch as there is no charge for the apartment, and there are warmth and sometimes other comforts, to say nothing of the sociability of the thing. In the absence of such hospitality, then a room in the village school, or perhaps in the local club (if there is such an institution), should be available gratis.

PRACTICE, NOT THEORY REQUIRED.

It needs hardly to be said that the instruction should be of the most elementary character to start with ; and, what is equally important, *it should partake as much of the “doing” description and as little of the “talking” or theory order as possible.* A youngster will take much greater interest in handling and working with tools than in learning how they should be handled and worked ; and he will pick up knowledge far more quickly from seeing or doing or assisting to do a thing than from hearing how it should be done. In our opinion, it is better to begin practically than theoretically, as children no less than grown-ups like to *see* what they are accomplishing ; and when manual deftness and capacity are being shown by the workers, the instructor will find the student in a more receptive mood for theory or principles. To arouse interest in the student is the first thing to do ; and that

can best be done, in the early days at least, by letting him do things and by letting him see things being done. Show him how to use and let him use the tools rather than merely tell him how to do so.

The instruction, therefore, being of the "practical" kind from the very commencement of the little class, it should also, as far as possible, be devoted to the production of things for which there is or is likely to be a demand—whether local or more general and extended. The object, after all, in the first instance, is not so much to teach theories or principles as to produce goods ; but there will usually be one or more attendants at a village class of greater ability than the others, and these will of their own volition take on more and more with the theory or principles in addition to the practice of their craft. That is all to the good. This latent and exceptional talent may become in a very real sense priceless to its possessor, and useful both to his class mates and beyond.

THE STIMULUS OF COMPETITIONS.

As stimulants there should be more or less informal competitions amongst the members of the class ; whilst, as the movement extends beyond the confines of the parish, there might

be inter-parish competitions, with, still later, a county competition, and finally one of national proportions. All these competitions, in fact, might well be linked up with the Home Arts and Industries Association, which holds every summer an exhibition of arts and crafts in London, at which numerous admirable specimens of work may be seen and purchased—work done largely by the class of people for whose betterment we are pleading.

SMALL HOLDERS AND HOME CRAFTS.

There are 292,446 statutory small holders in the country (that is to say, men who cultivate over one and not above fifty acres); about 70 per cent of whom hold their land as adjuncts to other village trades or occupations. The cultivation of a small holding is, at present, an uncertain business; and for that reason it is not yet a very popular proposition among labourers who would have to rely entirely upon what they could make out of their holdings for the maintenance of their families.

However, what can be done for the men who would be glad to become small holders if they could do so with some reasonable assurance that their little capital would not be swallowed up by the first unpropitious season or the first unprofit-

able market ? If they or their households could be given an additional means of income which might help them to more certain prosperity, and which in any case would avert swift ruin, they would probably come forward in larger numbers as applicants for small holdings. And as they cannot all be village wheelwrights, blacksmiths, grocers, innkeepers, higgler, etc., what better can they and their families fall back on than some form of domestic industry which could be profitably pursued in their spare time ?

Small holders, by the very circumstance of their calling, have to exercise quite uncommon resource and ingenuity, and they would take readily to handicrafts of a profitable character. The village wheelwright, saddler, or carpenter will testify without any special pleading to that end to the handiness of the average small holder. They are, in fact, sometimes disposed to be somewhat bitter on the subject ; as they will confess that they have more work to do when the land is held in large holdings than when it is divided into small holdings. The large farmer has perforce to employ outside labour for almost all that he requires in the way of construction or repair, and he can afford to do so ; but the small holder is usually unable or not desirous to pay another man for repairs to his harness, implements,

RURAL METAL WORK



A HAMMERED BRASS TRAY

Done by a boy of ten years of age.

buildings, and fencing, and therefore he does them himself or possibly with the aid of a neighbour. The work may not and often is not done as well ; but the point is that this case goes to show that with a little instruction our small holders could probably make small articles quite as cheaply, quite as artistically, and of quite as useful a character as the peasant proprietors of Germany, Switzerland, France, Russia, Austria, or other Continental countries.

The methods, indeed, outlined for interesting the ordinary labourers and their families in handicraft work, apply equally well to the small holders and their dependents. It is not, of course, desired to make or to perpetuate any class difference between hired labourers and independent small holders. What we wish to emphasise is that small holders in our country need auxiliary employment as much as hired labourers (often very much more so) ; and, if the former are grouped together, they could be organised for handicraft purposes much more effectively than when scattered about in single or very small numbers.

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND CRAFT WORK : AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE.

A certain amount of handicraft work (for teaching purposes only) is being done in the

elementary schools: almost entirely in urban centres. Unfortunately, when the pupils leave the schools, the usefulness of this is largely wasted for the want of some kind of organisation to direct it into proper channels.

There is one particularly agreeable exception, however, to this criticism, and that is Liverpool, where the Education Committee has supplied the necessary link between the trained child and the employers of labour. For example, the children in many of the elementary schools of that city have been taught to give expression to their ideas in woodwork; and in some cases they have made toy models of buildings, railway stations, schools, etc.

When the war broke out, the question of the employment of the adolescent and young people leaving school was very much before the Committee and local public. It was suggested that classes might be formed, and some of the young people trained for the toy trade. The Education Committee fell in with the idea with praiseworthy alacrity; and the Elementary Schools Management Sub-Committee released two teachers who were exceptionally qualified to take charge of such a class, and the work was thereupon started. The interest of local artists was enlisted in the designing of new models, as

also the interest of local toy manufacturers ; the latter of whom agreed to take the pupils into their employ as soon as they became proficient. It is hoped to retain a constant succession of pupils from the class ready to go into the toy business.

It may be mentioned that the pupils for the class are selected from a Juvenile Employment Registry kept by the Education Committee, and that very great care is exercised in the selection. The fact that the Education Committee runs its own Juvenile Employment Bureau, and has first-hand information, therefore, about the precise qualifications of every child or young person leaving the schools, has, we understand, been of the utmost value in this and other enterprises of the kind. The Bureau is a feature which we venture to suggest might well be copied in other districts. The Committee has been able to select for the toy-making trades strong and suitable girls fresh from school ; each of whom is readily amenable to the change of discipline from the school to the workshop.

The movement began with a single toy class, but also on lines capable of immediate and almost indefinite extension as opportunity for useful employment offers. We have only one suggestion to make regarding it, and it is that the work

should not be confined to toy making. It should, as far as possible, embrace *all* the domestic handicrafts. Moreover, the importance of not letting the craft work performed in our elementary schools fall into desuetude after the pupils leave will be better understood when it is stated that in the latest year for which we have official data (1907-1908), there were no less than 3674 schools whose scholars received instruction in crafts ; that the number of scholars who attended regularly for the twenty weeks during the "special subjects" year was 141,933, and that the amount of the Government grant reached no less a sum than £48,636.

CHAPTER VII

TOOLS AND APPLIANCES

THE actual cost of starting a domestic industry in a practical form is very much less than most persons think ; and herein, indeed, lies a great advantage both to the worker and to the success of the movement.

Take, for instance, fretwork. When the writer started this work, he first of all bought an extremely inexpensive outfit, at a cost of 7s. 6d. ; this consisting of about a dozen simple tools and an equal number of saws. He "bought" his experience. Had he had an adviser he would have purchased a treadle saw, costing about £1, instead of a hand saw. For an outside cost of £1 10s. anyone can set himself up with all that is necessary, including patterns and a supply of woodwork on which to begin operations. Many a beginner has done excellent work at an initial outlay of not more than half a guinea. The after cost in any case is little, and is mainly one of saws, of which an enthusiastic amateur is likely to break an unnecessary number ; but as the

charge for new ones is extremely small—varying from about 4d. to 6d. a dozen—it is in no sense serious. From the moment the amateur has begun, and still more so from that when he has finished his first piece of fretwork, he feels a new interest has arisen. There is a zest which is compelling ; and, in the case of the village class we have in mind, the financial outlook is at least a cheery one, whilst the intellectual treat created by the actual work performed has an interest of its own and is altogether admirable.

Next, take wood carving. Here again the writer tried the work for himself ; and he has no doubt that this and fretwork, and certain other hobbies of the domestic kind, would have occupied by far the most of his daily attentions had he not to devote his efforts to other aspects of the movement for connecting our people with the land and for the revivifying of country life. At all events, the pleasure he felt in carving simple things for himself was very considerable indeed ; and it is mainly because of the pleasure personally realised that he wishes others to know what is, or may be, open to them to possess too. The cost of the tools was under £1 10s., and a great amount of most interesting work can be done with tools costing but a few shillings. The wood, too, is cheap enough on which to commence operations.

RURAL LACE WORK



TEACHING LACE MAKING to CHILDREN IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The writer carved numerous small articles in his spare time ; the first of which was a small panel about ten inches square, the design on which, though no doubt crude on completion from an expert's point of view, showed him that simple carving is well within the intelligence and immediate capacity of the average village boy or girl.

In the matter of leather working, it is desirable to begin one's work under the guidance of an instructor, although much easily acquired information can be obtained without the slightest difficulty, all that is necessary in this respect being to read the plain and ample instructions to be found in one or other of the shilling hand-books. A knowledge of the different kinds of leather—such as the various sorts of "calf" leather, Morocco, cowhide, Persian, Russian, pig-skin, etc.—is desirable, and this can be obtained in an hour's reading and by actual comparison of the kinds in question.

With a knife or two, a pair of pliers, a punch, a measuring stick, a tracer, a modeller, a liner, a marking board, an emery stick, a riveter, a screw crease, an awl or two, a few suitable needles, cartridge paper and straw board, a few small brushes and a sponge, some dye, glue, and leather varnish, and a very few other small

articles, together with the necessary leather and any necessary buckles and such-like metal articles (which last are purchased at the hardware shops), the worker can turn out an almost endless variety of both ornamental and useful articles ; such as braces, straps, labels, garters, dog leads, dog collars, wrist straps, blotting pads, writing and letter cases, collar and brush cases, cases for small musical instruments, a great variety of small bags, satchels, etc.—in fact, the worker has a wide choice before him in working in leather.

Remember, all the appliances named for leather working are not necessary for any given article of manufacture, and that they are mentioned simply as indicating roughly those required if practically every branch of leather work is adopted as a domestic industry in any village or town. Remember also that the total expense is very small indeed if the worker seeks at first only to make one or other of the simpler articles. A few shillings would start a worker ; whilst a five-pound note would easily provide all that is necessary for quite a number of workers, especially if there were any interchange or common use of appliances, as might very well be expected to be the case.

Repoussé work, which may be described as the

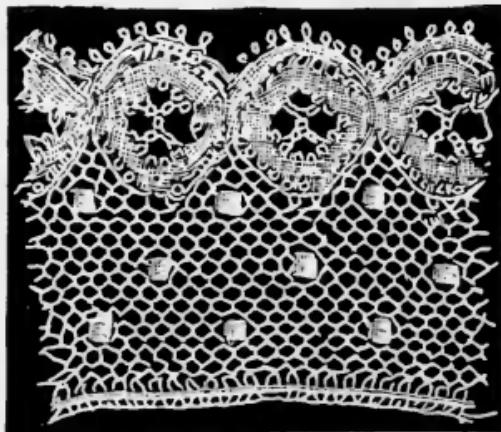
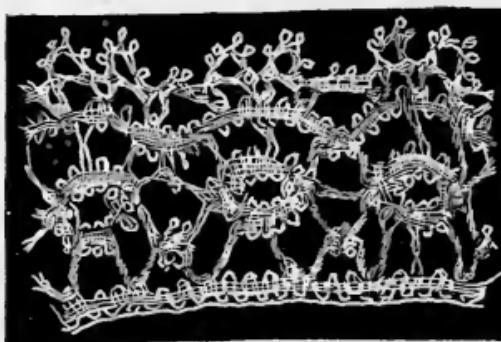
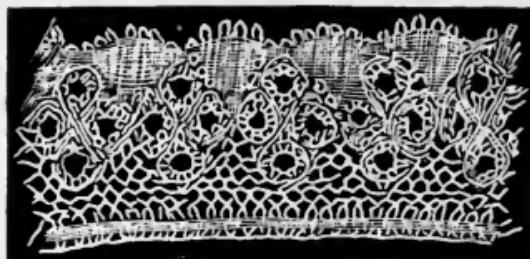
taking hold of a sheet of thin metal, and, by means of a few simple appliances and tools, raising on its surface ornamental objects by hammering or beating them up from behind, is most fascinating employment, and not expensive unless the raw material upon which one wishes to work is gold or silver. Other raw materials are brass, pewter, iron, copper, lead, or the alloy known as Britannia metal. It is essentially a domestic industry, and very little more expensive in the way of tools and appliances than the other employments named. A very few lessons regarding it will be enough for the youngster intent upon making headway ; and it is essentially one in which practice aids the student. Careful effort is the key to success in repoussé work ; the admirable effects, exceptionally pleasing and often exceptionally profitable, being acquired only by the effort of which we speak.

Bent ironwork, too, is so simple, inexpensive, and pleasant that there is no reason why anyone who wishes to learn it should not easily do so. It is, in fact, a domestic industry particularly easy of acquirement. For a sum nearer a half-sovereign than a sovereign the worker can obtain practically all he requires in the shape of tools and appliances. These are mainly a pair each of nippers, long-nosed pliers, shears, and pincers, a

rimer, a hammer, some rivets, a bradawl or two, and a small vice. Materials for working upon are iron, copper, and brass, which are obtainable in strips or sheets. The things that can be twisted or wrought into pleasing shape by a boy or girl—or by a “grown-up”—are almost endless in their number and variety: e.g. photograph and other frames, mounts for glasses, bowls and vases, chains and hooks; brackets; lantern cases; candlesticks; leg rests for small ornamental tables; flowers of all sorts; easels, etc. etc. There is no legitimate excuse for our not making in our cottage homes a large portion at any rate of the ornamental bent metal goods we now import from overseas.

What we have said indicative of the small cost of the tools and appliances necessary for use in the crafts named equally applies to the other domestic industries. The tools, for example, for simple carpentry work are a matter of a few shillings, and these in part are, as well as those used in fretwork, of use in toy-making as well as in purely carpentry work. Lace making can be started for a few shillings, as also embroidery, art needle-work, and knitting. Weaving is rather more expensive to begin, as the case of Miss Glanville shows (Chapter IV), but it is small even then, and the appliances last longer.

RURAL LACE WORK



THREE SPECIMENS OF PILLOW LACE



COST OF TOOLS AND APPLIANCES IS SMALL.

We venture to repeat, therefore, what we said at the beginning of this chapter, namely, that "the actual cost of starting a domestic industry in a practical form is very much less than most persons think." We would add to this observation—and it is extremely important where pounds, shillings, and pence are concerned—that in the real conduct of a cottage industry much expense may be saved by the workers if they will make the utmost use of the raw materials with which they work; and if they will also, as far as possible, make use of any available local supplies. For example, any odd pieces of lead or iron may be used for weighting toys, etc., requiring weighting; and it is cheaper to use these—which in many cases would otherwise be thrown away—than to have to buy the material from a dealer. If a purchase of a bit of iron or lead is necessary, the local blacksmith or carpenter will often be able to meet the need: or to supply it gratis from absolutely (to him) waste material. Again, when using a fret-saw to cut out an article from a piece of wood used for fretwork, the pattern of the article or of the parts of the pattern should be so placed or marked upon the wood that there shall be, after sawing, as little waste

wood as possible : whilst the "waste" pieces themselves will in numerous cases come in useful for all sorts of things. Attention to little details of this sort are most desirable.

Moreover, such materials as are not available locally, and also the tools and appliances necessary for working up the various materials, are best obtainable in large rather than in small supplies. On this point, however, the funds at disposal must be the guide in purchasing. We desire, however, to add that all materials necessary to obtain away from one's district—as also all tools and appliances—should preferably be procurable through the manager of the National Association alluded to in the chapter on "Markets." He would purchase his supplies at wholesale prices and sell to the villagers, either individually or collectively, as near thereto as possible : as all he would require would be just to cover the expenses of the transaction. He would, further, give useful hints and advice to the village workers ; he would, in fact—in conjunction with any local organisers or friends—act to the fullest possible extent as a helper in all matters pertaining to the production and eventual sale of the articles made in the village.

CHAPTER VIII

FINANCE

WHERE a rural factory has been established in connection with what we may term an existing urban industry, it may be assumed, generally speaking, that those business men associated with it will have satisfied themselves of their ability—financially and otherwise—to carry on the same successfully.

When, however, we come to consider the position of those to be engaged in domestic industries, it is soon apparent that even the small cost for tools and appliances alluded to in the chapter on that subject is an impossible one to our agricultural wage-earners.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURER MUST BE FINANCED AT FIRST.

The agricultural labourer is not able to spend money either upon the getting of instruction in the domestic industries, or, in the early days, upon buying the necessary tools or raw materials ; and

it is incumbent upon those who wish to improve his lot to render him financial aid to enable him to obtain all these. Higher wages would help the situation, but we think it unreasonable to ask an employer to pay higher wages to a workman in order that the latter may engage in work in the profits of which the employer himself will not share. Whence, then, is the financial assistance to come ?

Country residents formerly possessed of more means than they required for the normal calls on their household and the upkeep of their properties have willingly in several cases started, in the way suggested in Chapter VI, a local fund from which books, tools, and materials have been found ; and in this friends and acquaintances have equally willingly joined, and they will still perhaps endeavour to undertake this work. Many of those, however, who live in rural districts and who, in normal circumstances, would be willing enough financially to help a movement of this sort are nowadays really unable to do so on any extended or national scale. Their help apart from finance they will, we are sure, readily give, and that is of great importance. Those who have had anything to do of late years in raising subscriptions for even the most pressing local purposes will agree with us when we say that the

task has been a heart-breaking one. We ought, therefore, not to rely—we have no right to rely—upon financial support towards the establishment of domestic industries from the so-called “better-to-do” classes. In many cases, we repeat, they will certainly help, and especially where those with profitable urban businesses and interests seek more or less rest and retirement amidst rural surroundings ; but, for financial help to any general or national extent, we must turn in other directions.

VILLAGE CHARITY FUNDS.

Now, in many cases a portion of the funds of village charities might well be used to pay for instruction and (for a period) materials and appliances under carefully framed regulations ; and if, at least, future schemes of the Charity Commission and of the Board of Education for the administration of rural endowments were so drawn up as to provide for a contingency of this sort it would prove of inestimable benefit. Too many of those schemes have resulted in a veritable spoliation of the rights of the poor ; and much the same observation, we regret to say, applies to-day, unless some effective parliamentary or other pressure can be brought to bear upon the Commission and Board referred to, who unfortunately are still surprisingly and often almost com-

pletely out of sympathy with the aims and aspirations of the poor and with those of the pious Founders of the Charities in question.

To give an instance. We were approached recently by the vicar of a rural parish in Lincolnshire, with reference to the administration of a Trust Fund created some three hundred years ago for the founding of a charity school for twelve poor boys, six of whom were to be drawn in equal number from two poor agricultural parishes, and six of whom were to be drawn from the county town. Some twenty years after its establishment the school was abolished, and another scheme for the administration of the fund was substituted for it. From that time forward the two villages ceased to share in the income to the extent to which they were entitled. As the result of representations made from time to time they were admitted to better shares ; but recently a further attempt at curtailment was made, and it was only as the result of strong representations by the Rural League to the proper authority (the Board of Education) that this further injustice was prevented, and the interests of the village poor preserved in the charity of the pious Founder. There are thousands of village charity funds in Britain.

There can, in our view, apart from the actual

EXAMPLES OF WHITE EMBROIDERY, ITALIAN EMBROIDERY (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY), SILK EMBROIDERY, GREEK LACE, AND RUSSIAN DARNING



relief of sickness or distress, hardly be a better application of village charitable funds than in assisting in a practical manner the young people of our rural parishes to become more capable workers, and workers, if possible, with an enlarged horizon before them. A youth who becomes both ploughman and craftsman has two strings to his bow, and a much brighter, broader, and far more pleasant intellectual outlook.

AID FROM THE DEVELOPMENT FUND.

Again, we might very well take a leaf out of the Irishman's book. In Ireland—apart altogether from public funds or large amounts placed annually at the disposal of the Irish Congested Districts Board, etc.—money has been devoted from the Ireland Development Act Grant (1903) and from other sources for “the economic development” of Ireland; and all sorts of schemes and things for the improvement and amelioration of the condition of the land workers have been ruled to come within that expression. We do not complain.

We have, however, a Development Fund Act (1909) for Great Britain and Ireland, in which it is also laid down that money may be granted for the “economic development” of the United Kingdom. It is impossible honestly to assert that

money expended for the improvement of the economic conditions under which our British rural poor live does not come within the designation of "economic development." The Irish case is our precedent.

RURAL CREDIT BANKS.

Further, the establishment of rural credit banks is most desirable. It is much more difficult to establish these in Great Britain than it is upon the Continent or even in Ireland. The reasons for this are well known to many of us, but to argue the point might lead to a political discussion, which in these pages at least we are anxious to avoid. We may, however, say that we have enquired into the question of village credit banks on the spot in six or seven Continental countries as well as in Great Britain and in Ireland ; and that we are satisfied such banks will never be a great and extended success in Great Britain until we tackle the question in a way other than that suggested in the only official Bill relating to it which has been placed before Parliament by the present Government. As that Bill has been withdrawn, there is hardly any necessity further to refer to it ; but as far as finance is concerned, it simply proposed to make grants towards "the cost of the formation" of

agricultural credit and insurance societies which should become registered under the Industrial Provident Societies Acts. It provided no capital at all. The Bill, so far as the British agricultural labourer is concerned, was upon wrong lines.

The Continental village credit banks are no doubt the type ultimately to aim at establishing ; but it is quite useless—and it is, in fact, cruel—to lead the nation to expect these to spring up in our country to any general extent under present conditions, and amongst a people so largely divorced from the soil.

What are these Continental village banks ? The members are, in the main, workers on the land, and, as in Ireland, they take a far more real interest in it than the tenant holders possess, or are ever likely to possess, under the Small Holdings Act of 1908. These foreigners have a security to offer for any loan they may obtain from their village bank which British labourers cannot offer. The former are mainly owners of their holdings ; the latter tenants, even where they occupy land at all. Each member of a credit bank abroad is responsible in the last resort for the repayment of a loan received by a member ; but, as each member also knows that the borrower is, so to speak, a substantial man—has usually security (land) which cannot run away—he is

not afraid to join in with his fellows as guarantor for repayment of the money. In Great Britain, however, the labourer is usually landless ; and is it likely he is going to pledge either his household goods or his live stock (where he has any) for the sake of a fellow-labourer ?

Granted, however, that he would be willing to do so, how are we going to start a bank amongst landless men who are already in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred without funds ; and who, therefore, are simply not in a position to supply funds to a bank from which the latter can lend to its members ? They are honest, but that form of credit is not alone sufficient for a loan in the commercial world. No ; if village credit banks are to be started with any prospect of success, the initial funds for them—and they need by no means be large—must, at present, come from an outside source. This view is supported by the Committee appointed by Mr. Lloyd George and others to enquire into the land question. If a labourer sees money is available to him (as in such a case he would), we believe that with a reasonable amount of “nursing” there is a reasonable prospect of village credit banks being a success ; and we believe, too—and this we regard as very important—that the labourer will ultimately be more and more willing to accept

responsibility on the lines common amongst the members of the Continental village credit banks. The Rural Credit Banks Bill propounded by the Rural League seems to us a practical measure for supplying funds to the agricultural labourer and other land workers ; it is especially adapted to the requirements of our people at the present stage of the rural social reform movement in our country ; and as a non-party measure it might well have been passed into law by this time, when it would have afforded much valuable aid to small holders and others during the past trying seasons.

THE LIVERIED COMPANIES SHOULD ASSIST.

Another direction whence financial aid might be derived is from the Liveried Companies. There are a large number of such bodies, mainly in the Metropolis, which were in former times closely connected with the trades whose names they bear. Some of them are still so connected. On the whole, however, this cannot be said of them ; and it is a matter for regret. The companies, in the main, possess annual incomes, some extremely large incomes. Such incomes are, in our opinion, spent on worthy objects ; but they might, we think, in part be more usefully spent. We do not wish to be thought to be

criticising these bodies in any carping sense. Whatever funds the companies receive—and we gave a list of these in a previous work—they are not squandered. All we ask is that the companies should more generally make financial grants towards the improvement or establishment of our industries ; and should perform such further useful functions in connection therewith as a real interest in them would dictate. A sum of £20,000 as a donation, and an annual subscription of £5000 for at least a period of years, would go a long way in establishing domestic industries in our villages ; and it does not seem a large or unreasonable request to make.

ARE WE THE “ BEST BUSINESS NATION IN THE WORLD ” ?

We have been spending an increasing amount of public money in recent years on agriculture, and very much more will need to be spent in the same direction if the agricultural condition of our country is to be regarded as a sound one. The investment is one undoubtedly of the highest national importance. In the investment, however, little has been done of a practical kind in Great Britain to afford to the workers upon the land either those agricultural advantages they have a right to expect in the way of small holdings



EXAMPLES of PISTOLA WORK

or those other rural advantages in the shape of the establishment of domestic industries. We are sometimes regarded as the best business nation in the world ; but we may be permitted to say that in our opinion we have very much to learn before we can honestly accept any such flattering testimony, and that a survey of conditions of rural life in Great Britain in this, the twentieth century, gives ample evidence of the correctness of such opinion.

CHAPTER IX

MARKETS: AN ASSOCIATION NEEDED¹

IT is one thing to manufacture an article ; it is another to sell it. Those who seek to establish an opening for domestic industries must recognise this at the outset, or they will be grievously disappointed. At the same time—and this should encourage them—knowing there is already a large demand for the imported articles they desire to see produced by our own people, they may feel assured that with common sense and reasonable perseverance and aid they have an excellent chance of success.

TWO METHODS OF SELLING GOODS.

Now, in considering the question of markets, it ought, in the matter of domestic handicrafts, to be an article of the producer's creed that he will not attempt to undersell what is known as "the trade." There are all sorts of methods of selling goods ; but there are two to which we especially desire to call attention.

¹ See Introduction.

THE FIRST METHOD.

One of these methods is for the villagers to dispose of their products direct to the wholesale firm or firms best in touch with the retail shopkeepers. There are many wholesale firms connected with almost every trade. The first object should be to find out the best for the particular goods in hand. If—as they should be—the goods are “first class,” and the wholesaler takes them, they will sell. If he is not giving the best competitive price, the producers will sooner or later be approached by other wholesalers, who will offer a better price. In that case, one must decide whether it is, all things considered, better to accept the offer of the new firm or firms or to continue to trade through the old one. Common sense is the best guide to a decision. For instance, is the new firm willing to make a contract for a year or more? and is it a “mushroom” concern, or one of age and respectability? If these questions can be satisfactorily answered, then, before agreeing to a change, it would—if the business relations with the first firm have been reasonably friendly—be sound policy to inform the firm politely of the situation. The firm should be told that a new and more satisfactory offer for the villagers’ products had been received, but

that before accepting it the villagers' representative wished, in fairness, to ask if the old firm would give terms equal to such new offer, in which case he would, of course, be pleased to continue the existing friendly relations. The old firm will appreciate the attention, and, what is more, will probably not only recognise the position in the way desired, but will be only too glad to do so. If that comes about, there will no doubt be a long and satisfactory business connection as a consequence ; and the villagers' industry will be established.

There should be no difficulty in getting into touch with a wholesale firm ; and the advantages are many. As an illustration of the latter point, it may be stated that the system does away with the necessity for the villagers employing a traveller or travellers to introduce the goods to the retailers, and, probably, all necessity for advertising or any serious amount of it. The wholesale firm has its own travellers. As to the other point, namely, getting into touch with a wholesaler, any local retail shopkeeper would tell the villagers' representative the name of such, or the address could be obtained from the London directory or from the directories of the other large urban centres.

In approaching a wholesaler, although business

usually knows no sentiment, such a one ought to be willing to take up and push the new British over the foreign goods. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the object in view, the greatest possible inducements should be held out to him. He should, for example, not only be offered the goods of the best quality at the very lowest prices, but if necessary, a slight loss for a period should be suffered in order to create or to facilitate business relations. The latter is a method common enough in establishing new businesses, and it is as well to recognise it. One may, indeed, lose a little for a time on selling, say, bent ironwork articles and gain the equivalent or more than it on, say, toy work, repoussé work, etc. ; in fact, to use a colloquial observation, “what one loses on the swings, one may make up on the roundabouts.”

It is not *always* easy, however, to get a wholesale firm in any trade to push the goods of new manufacturers ; but that is the first thing to seek after, and village manufacturers or their representatives should make every effort in that direction. Nor is it always easy even for a wholesaler himself to dispose of new goods to retailers, even though the wares are as good as, or better than, say, the foreign ones. The wholesaler’s difficulties, therefore, must be recognised ; and that is one reason why we said above that he

should be accommodated in the matter of price, even though it involves a loss for a short period to the producers.

Social influence, where possible, may be brought to bear on the wholesaler to take up the new goods ; but as that, after all, is rather an artificial form of establishing trade relations, we much prefer other and more real business methods.

THE SECOND METHOD.

It would be well, therefore—and this is the second and preferable way of selling the goods to which we desire to refer—for producers, by the Association or machinery explained below, to have a representative of their own, whose business it should be to attend to the requirements of the trade. He should be in close touch with the producing districts, and should know exactly what those districts can turn out, both as to variety and quantity. He should also assist the local workers in those districts in all matters relating to the purchase and supply of raw materials, tools, appliances ; and, buying these in, possibly, large quantities, he would be able to sell them, and should sell them, to the workers at a bare margin above the cost and expenses. To assist him and the workers, he should have an office and warehouse in a suitable centre. The

RURAL EMBROIDERY WORK



A TABLE CENTRE (ON HAND-MADE LINEN)



A TABLE CENTRE (ON HAND-MADE LINEN)

Metropolis is the best for the purpose ; but, as the trade develops, there may be a branch in each of a few other large centres. At his chief centre, at least, he should be provided with a full supply of goods, samples of which he could take round for the inspection of the wholesale traders ; which they could also themselves come to inspect ; or from which he could supply the trade, whether wholesale or retail, provided, however, in the latter case the prices are not lower than those at which the wholesale trader himself could sell to the retailers at a fair profit. For a sum of £500 to £1000 a year such a representative, with an assistant or two, and suitable premises, installed with the necessary telephone, etc., could be provided ; and as this expense would, in the last resort, be spread over the products of the whole of the village districts, the percentage chargeable to each article or village would manifestly decrease with the increased products and sales.

A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION NEEDED.¹

To carry the above into effect would necessitate the establishment of a National Association ; whose Executive Committee should, on the one hand (through their Manager), be in close touch with the village producers through the local

¹ See Introduction.

secretary or local advisers of the last-named, and on the other hand with the wholesale business community handling the village goods. We do not wish to discuss here the full details upon which such an Association as is contemplated should be formed. These could be, and had much better be, discussed at a preliminary meeting, and decided upon at a subsequent one. The main thing is to recognise that such a National Association is necessary. The Association should, however, preferably consist of voluntary subscribers, who seek no personal profit, or one limited to, say, 4 or 5 per cent ; and the village districts should be each affiliated to it by the payment of a very small annual subscription (say, of half a crown or half a guinea) ; each district to have at least a local secretary, and better still with a local Committee and President.

We see no reason why such an Association should not also be financially aided out of the Development Fund ; at any rate for a period of years. Is there any difference in principle between such an Association, which does not work for the profit of its members, and, say, the Agricultural Organisation Society, which is State-aided ?

There is just one final point upon which it is desirable to say a few words. In the event of no

wholesale house or houses being found willing to devote the necessary time and expense in pushing the sale of the villagers' goods, the Headquarters Staff of the new Association would or might have to be increased by the appointment of a sufficient number of travellers, whose mission, of course, would be to visit and sell the goods to those retail shopkeepers who do not (as so many *do*) make a practice of going periodically to London and other centres to inspect and purchase their supplies. These travellers might be whole- or part-time representatives. If the latter, they would travel the Metropolitan and provincial districts, partly on behalf of the Association and partly on behalf of other but not competing firms. It would be advisable, however, to employ whole-timers for preference ; as there can be no adequate financial or other check upon persons who work partly for one firm and partly for another. Supposing half a dozen whole-time travellers were employed, the salaries and expenses would run into something like £1500 to £2000 per annum. These representatives would cover the whole country. The expense is not a great one considering the area covered. It is an expense not to be avoided either under a completely and entirely co-operative system or by a system under which the Association has itself to do the work of the

wholesale traders ; but it is an expense to be avoided if, as may reasonably be hoped, the wholesale traders will lend their aid to a movement which places no business disadvantage in their way.

One other matter. The selling of the villagers' products would be much assisted by patriotic people making it a point of honour to enquire for British-made goods when making their purchases and to purchase the same. We shall assume that such goods would be worth as much at least as the competing foreign articles, whilst an enquiry which results in a purchase would be all to the advantage of the British rural workers. Interested people, moreover, can much assist the movement if, as opportunity offers, they will talk to their friends and acquaintances relative to the new cottage industries, and enclose with their correspondence cards or circulars concerning them. Such things done individually would be small matters, but their cumulative effect would be considerable and beneficial.

COST OF THE ASSOCIATION.

It would appear, therefore, that for a sum of £500 to £1000 a year a completely-fitted-up office and warehouse could be established and staffed in the Metropolis, from which the goods produced

by our cottagers could be sold ; and that for a further sum of £1500 to £2000 a year a staff of travellers could also be engaged to travel the whole country introducing and selling the goods to the retail shopkeepers. It is not, however, considered at all likely that the travellers would be required ; as there is little doubt that the wholesale trade would be glad to take supplies for the retailers from the Association's warehouse, whilst large numbers of the latter who habitually or periodically go to the Metropolis to purchase supplies, would go to the same warehouse for the purpose. We have placed the figures at the highest, so that there may be ample margin whether travellers are or are not engaged.

CHAPTER X

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES ABROAD

GERMANY.—Probably in no country in Europe has greater attention been given to the question of home industries than in the different States of the German Empire. The chief motive of this attention has been to keep a healthy peasantry on the land, and it has arisen from a recognition of the fact—which is equally applicable to Great Britain—that these workers must have some means of supplementing their income from the land. In Germany, as our enquiries on the spot have convinced us, the need for this extra occupation is really less urgent than it is in our own country, seeing that the German Government have fortified their policy of encouraging and helping peasants to become owners of land by a widespread and easy use of public and private credit. Still, it is considered necessary or desirable even in the case of Germany. The intention and scope of the movement in that country were made the subject of a report written by Miss Edlmann for the Board of

Education, and issued in 1912. That document amply bears out our own previous enquiries, in which we were much assisted by the late Karl Blind.

STATE-AIDED TRADE SCHOOLS.

In Bavaria, we are told in Miss Edlmann's report, State and State-aided trade schools have been started with the special view of fostering home industries, by means of awakening and training the artistic instinct dormant in the peasantry. They lie scattered all over Bavaria, and are to be found for the most part where the industry—now State-nurtured with such success and discrimination—has existed for ages. To test the efficiency of the teaching and the saleableness of the work produced, the State itself sells the produce of the schools and pays the pupils for work done. It feels this admissible, as it always expressly avoids all competition with existing local industries, and aims at creating its own market by the education of public taste, striving to prove that beauty and suitability can be combined and placed within the reach of the slenderest purse. Nothing obsolete is made, modern exaggerations are carefully excluded, and there is no production of trash.]

There are three groups of schools, namely:

schools for woodwork and basket weaving ; schools for women's handicrafts (embroidery and lace making) ; and schools for ceramics and glass making.

All the schools for woodwork are situated in Upper Bavaria, and the one at Berchtesgaden, " perhaps more than any other, expresses the characteristic taste of the Bavarian peasantry most definitely." Its speciality is " very brightly painted wood ware, such as ornamental boxes, cradles, sleighs, go-carts, and toys of all kinds, especially animals," and the articles are readily bought by the summer visitors to the neighbourhood. The school has a four years' course and gives a thorough training to art cabinet makers and figure carvers.

The basket weaving school at Lichtenfels trains its pupils in accuracy, good taste, and in variety of manufacture. The industry is of ancient date —whole parishes, including children of all ages, working at it. Miss Edlmann, the writer of the report in question, says that the examples she saw " were of real beauty and delicacy, and consisted of baskets of all kinds, with and without handles, with and without lids, work baskets, flower baskets, paper baskets, etc. Tables, easy chairs, stands, etc., are also made."

The embroidery school at Enchenreuth con-

sists of classes held during the summer months ; in the spring all are helping in the fields to prepare the land for sowing, and in the autumn all are busy potato digging. The girls are taken on leaving the elementary school, and forty to fifty are trained annually. In October, 1910, thirty girls had already been trained who were competent to be employed on commission work during the winter months, and to this number about ten are added yearly. The girls are very keen, and are paid at a rate equivalent to 2½d. an hour of English money.

Pillow lace schools exist in the mountainous regions on the Bohemia frontier. Without the help of some subsidiary calling, the soil in these parts has ever proved insufficient to support its peasant population. It was not until 1899, however, that the Bavarian Government took the matter up, and since that time it appears the lace making industry has been developed with most gratifying results.

EDUCATING CRAFTSMEN : A SOUND POLICY.

Württemberg, like Bavaria, is thoroughly convinced of the soundness of the policy of educating independent craftsmen and aiding its home industries. It, too, has its State-aided trade schools for this purpose. The principle on which

the Government works is that, before State aid is given, the Commune or parish must have proved the necessity for such a school by having started it ; and, after aid is given, the Commune must continue in active co-operation.

Baden supports the spinning industry ; Saxony develops its peasant lace industry ; Hesse-Nassau (Prussia) has a trade school for small iron and steel ware ; and Alsace and Lorraine encourage the family industries of pottery, lace making, linen and cotton weaving, coarse wood ware (such as shoes, shingles, etc.), white embroidery, clothing and whitework for export, and saddlery. During the winter months 20,000 women and girls at least are employed in hair-net weaving.

An interesting example of how an industry may be started is that of one which recently made its appearance among the peasant home-workers of Geschwenda, a place situated in the Thuringian Forest. The district possesses a considerable seed industry. As each man returns from his daily work, he brings home an armful of sticks gathered from the common forest land through which he passes. During the busy season these are just thrown down and left. When winter sets in and all outside work is at an end, men, women, and children alike set to work to peel and prepare this collected wood, turning it into carnation

sticks of various lengths, and seed labels of various sizes, all neatly cut, sized, bundled, and ready for market. Until lately the produce passed through a surprising number of hands before reaching the final purchaser ; but the peasants have formed a Co-operative Association, and are now dealing direct with the dealers, among whom are some English customers.

RUSSIA.—It is computed that some 8,000,000 people in European Russia divide their time between working on the land and craftsmanship, and some of the things they make are wondrously and beautifully fashioned. When the day's work is finished on the land, the peasants store up raw materials, and upon these they work during the long months when the homes of many of them are almost hidden in snow. An extraordinary example of their skill and patience was exhibited in London recently. It consisted of a box just big enough to contain a pea, and it held a wooden tea set of thirty-two articles ! Embroidery and lace, linen and woven articles, lacquered work, highly ingenious toys made with penknives, small wooden implements delicately and boldly carved, leather work, home-cured skins, horn goods, pottery, jewellery, bronze and enamel work, and silks and carpets are among the articles turned out by the Russian peasants.

RUSSIAN PEASANTS AND THE WAR.

In the war Russia found her peasant population of the highest value in making at home all sorts of woollen and other clothing for soldiers at the front. The Government lent out, where necessary, small machines to individual peasant families for knitting, etc., purposes, and the quantity of goods supplied by the peasantry to the Army at a time of national difficulty was enormous.

In his book on "The Russian People" Mr. Maurice Baring says: "I have found the Russian workman quick in understanding what is needed of him, and versatile in his power of being able to turn his hand to different trades. I know an illiterate peasant who, after having served under a French cook, reproduced, and now still reproduces, to the delight of the richer peasants when they employ his services on festive occasions, the finished simplicity, taste, and excellence of the best French cooking. Among the peasants and the soldiers (who are peasants) I have seen astonishingly versatile men—men capable at the same time of cooking an excellent dinner, of mending a watch, of making fireworks, and of painting scenery for a theatre. In casual conversations with peasants and workmen all

over the country, I have never found myself up against a brick wall of obstinate non-comprehension, but I have had rather the experience of being constantly met half-way. Foreign architects and various other foreign employers of labour have told me that they find as a rule the Russian artisan adaptable and quick to understand and carry out a new idea."

FRANCE.—In France, where half the population live on agriculture, there are at least a million and a half workers engaged in home industries. At any rate, our enquiries show that most of the toilet articles, such as hair-brushes, tooth-brushes, and combs are manufactured in the rural districts. With tooth-brushes France provides largely for the wants of the whole world. Muslin manufacture all around Taare is largely a rural industry, a great majority of the cottagers being expert in the work. In Normandy and the Nord cotton velvets and plain cottons are woven to a great extent in the villages. The silk industry is still largely a domestic industry, as also are the cutlery, the netting, the jewellery, and the turnery trades. At St. Etienne, the "small man's" town, many of the weavers—the owners of one, two, or a few looms—have their looms driven by electricity supplied by a local electrical company.

“EVERY HOUSE HAS ITS TURNING LATHE.”

A writer in “Irish Rural Life and Industry” declares that “from Romorantin, in Loire-et-Cher, to Argentan and Le Blanc, there is one immense workshop, where handkerchiefs are embroidered, and shirts, cuffs, collars, and all sorts of ladies’ linen are sewn and embroidered. There is not a house where the women are not earning money at that trade. At Fougères, to the north-east of Rheims, thousands of women are engaged in sewing boot uppers and embroidering fancy shoes. Even the making of cardboard boxes for the boots is a big industry. Tinchebrai is a great centre for small goods in iron, mother-of-pearl, and horn. Around Solesmes you have whole villages that live on polishing small marble ornaments. Ardochin Dumazet, a writer who has made a special study of home industries, states that “in the village of Fresnaye there is not a house in which wooden spoons and other wooden articles are not made. The variety is bewildering : spoons, salt boxes, scales, bobbins for weavers, wooden measures and funnels, mouse-traps, clothes-pegs, spoons for jam and salad, etc. Every house has its turning lathe, or some other tools for dealing with wood. The earnings are not high, but each worker owns his

house and garden, and occasionally a plot of ground. For many miles on both sides of the Loire old men and women and the children help to earn by sewing buttons on to pieces of cardboard."

Every year, in Paris, at Christmas time, necessitous persons are allowed a temporary licence to sell articles of their own manufacture along the pavements of the Paris boulevards ; there is a somewhat similar custom in London, with the difference, however, that the necessitous persons in our country employed in the trade sell articles of foreign and principally German manufacture.

SWITZERLAND.—It is unnecessary to go into much detail about the home industries of Switzerland, as it would be merely recapitulating facts with which everyone interested in the movement is already familiar, and to which in a previous work we also ventured to call attention.¹ According to a French economist, the secret of Swiss prosperity is the happy union of agricultural life with home industries. At any rate the Swiss peasant is a wood carver, a maker of parts of watches, or a toy maker, and his family help him either in finishing his work or in earning money

¹ *The Rural Industries of England.* E. Marlborough and Co., London.

by lace making, fancy weaving, embroidery, etc. etc.

ITALY.—There is very little in Italy in the way of home industries carried on by the villagers ; and certainly it is not in any way to be compared with those carried on by similar classes in Germany, Switzerland, Russia, and other Continental countries. The Italian peasant is blessed with a sort of climate which enables him to grow a succession of crops practically all the year round ; and hence he has not the spare time at his disposal for the conduct of subsidiary employments which is available to the agricultural workers elsewhere.]

Mr. Richard Bagot, the well-known author of "My Italian Tour" and other works, has kindly sent us an expression of his views on this subject ; and as he not only confirms the view above expressed, but having resided so long in Italy, speaks with much authority, we are sure his information on this and other points will be read with much interest. Mr. Bagot says :

["Winter does not imply, with the Italian peasant, any temporary interruption in agricultural labour ; and if he happens to be a native of mountainous or grazing districts, he as often as not goes to other regions during the winter months where labour is needed—or he even

emigrates for those months. In the province of Lucca, for instance, which adjoins me here (Province of Pisa), it is not at all unusual for peasants to go yearly as far as America and return to their native villages in time for the spring and summer labour. Moreover, it is a very common but a very great mistake on the part of foreigners in general, to regard the Italian peasant as very poor. Nothing could be further from fact—though, of course, in the more mountainous parts there is sometimes great poverty amongst them. As a class, however, they are probably the best off in every way of all the working classes. A very large proportion of them are proprietors of the soil they cultivate ; and their 'domain' is, so to speak, entirely self-contained, providing for all their domestic wants except clothing—and sometimes even this is furnished from their own resources.

" Luxuries, by which I mean anything apart from the strict necessities of life, are the only things for which they have to resort to shops ; and among these luxuries must be included butcher's meat, which is eaten but comparatively rarely. The peasant's 'podere,' as we call it, provides him with every other kind of flesh—poultry, rabbits, etc., as well as bread, wine, vegetables, fruit, and oil. He is therefore

practically independent of the markets so far as his home provision is concerned."

NO NEED FOR SUBSIDIARY RURAL INDUSTRIES IN ITALY.

" It will be readily understood, therefore, that under these conditions the average Italian peasant has neither the time, nor the need, to increase his income by what I might term 'fancy' means. During the winter evenings there are endless articles to be made for home use—though of late years, owing to the rapid increase of a remarkably high standard of education among the peasant classes, the men naturally like to resort, after their long day of never less than twelve hours' and often sixteen hours' work, to their clubs and little tobacconists' shops, where the newspapers are read out and politics and business generally discussed during games of cards and over a glass of wine. In this way, the home manufacture of articles has certainly suffered ; but, on the other hand, the peasants have far more money to spend than they had even ten years ago—and other industrial classes reap the benefit.

" The womenfolk, too, are as hard-working as the men—and when not actually engaged on the ground are fully occupied in looking after the

poultry, which yields them a very considerable sum yearly, being largely exported to France, England, and Germany in normal times.

“It is, of course, difficult to lay down any rule in a country differing so widely as to habits and customs, and also as to economic conditions, as Italy—and in certain parts there is no doubt a small production of domestic articles made by peasants to sell to foreigners, or to supply to shops where foreigners go to buy characteristic articles. These, however, are the exception, and could not in any way be regarded as typical of Italian custom.

“In short, I think that it may be said that, in the general way, the Italian peasant has no need to produce such articles ; firstly, because he has to spend all or most of his time on his land ; secondly, because his land as a rule supplies him and his family with all he wants in the way of necessaries ; and thirdly, because as a matter of fact he is, as a rule, by no means the poverty-stricken individual he is believed to be by those who are not acquainted with his real conditions and surroundings. The average visitor to Italy is apt to be deceived by the outward appearances of poverty. I have an instance of this very close to me here. To judge from the surroundings of one of the peasants I know—who often works for

me—one would imagine that he was really poor. Every year, however, he is able to buy a fresh piece of land—last year a ‘*podere*’ at 20,000 francs, or £800—and he thinks nothing of giving sixty pounds for a pair of oxen for tillage purposes, which he may sell again, perhaps, for more. There are countless similar instances in all parts of Italy—I mean, of course, the agricultural parts.

“ Taxation here does not hit the peasant classes ; and I should say that, taken as a whole, those classes are wealthier at the present time than the corresponding classes in any other country. The ‘*métayer*’ system, which is also so largely in action in Italy, places the peasant on a very good economic basis ; and, in agricultural districts, it is usually entirely his own fault if he is not at any rate fairly well off and not under any necessity to increase his earnings by work not directly profitable to his natural business.”

SWEDEN.—The Swedes have always been what they themselves call “*händigt folk*”—that is, a people clever with their hands. They are also a very industrious people, and the wish to be “*doing something*” is universal.

Among the home industries of the country, perhaps the most important at present is weaving,

which has taken a new lease of life. All over the country weaving schools are found, where, for a moderate sum, anyone can be taught the art, and among the pupils are to be found young and old, rich and poor. The well-to-do ladies take a pride in showing their friends the portières, curtains, carpets, or furniture covering, etc., which they have woven "themselves," and their more humble sisters earn a good livelihood by weaving for others.

Lace making is a very old Swedish industry, particularly pillow lace making. Being an especially flourishing industry in and around the town of Wadstena, the name of Wadstena-spetsar was given to this kind of lace. The art was originally practised in the religious houses, from whence it was communicated to the people. Most beautiful work has been and is done, and it is nearly as popular as weaving.

Wood carving is another handicraft with very ancient traditions in Sweden. The museums of the country are collecting the finest examples of the old Scandinavian carvings, but excellent specimens are to be met with outside of those institutions. As an industry wood carving ranks high in Sweden, and the man or woman who can unite the sense of the artist with the skill of the craftsman is sure of a good income.

Among work more for the multitude, who are neither very artistic nor specially ambitious, but who are forced by circumstances to make their pastimes pay, such work as making and painting wooden objects like chip baskets, boxes, trinket boxes, etc., is much practised. The chip basket is quite an institution in Sweden ; being made in every conceivable form and size, from big travelling boxes and hat-boxes down to miniature baskets of no use at all except as souvenirs. Both the chip baskets and other wooden articles are often gaily painted.

The tourist is a good customer for all these works of industry ; but there is also quite a big home demand for them, and there is seldom any lack of orders. Of late years German manufacturers have been exploiting the Swedish market with imitation machine-made goods ; so that foreign purchasers need to exercise some care in order to get the genuine articles.

Tapestry weaving and leather work have also been revived in Sweden with some success, and the old designs from which the work is being done are particularly admirable.

OTHER COUNTRIES.

We need hardly perhaps refer at length to further Continental countries. In Belgium prac-

tically nothing is done in the way of domestic industries beyond the production of the famous Brussels lace, which is still made in some of the workers' homes. Nor have we noticed on our visits to Denmark that the peasants in that country engaged in much beyond dairying, in which industry they are deeply interested and, as we all know, have achieved extraordinary success. In Austria and Hungary, however, a great deal is done in the way of domestic crafts ; and some few years ago, when we were at Buda Pesth, we were shown excellent specimens of all sorts of craftsmanship. In the Balkans—particularly in Serbia (a nation of small-holders) and in Bulgaria—a great deal is accomplished in the way of domestic crafts, as might be supposed, seeing that the people here, as in more northern parts, have plenty of time to devote to the work. Of Spain and Portugal we have no information, but we should imagine that very little auxiliary work is done by the people in their homes in either of these countries.

CHAPTER XI

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES IN IRELAND

AT the Irish International Exhibition an important section was devoted to the products of the domestic industries of Ireland, and it was a surprising introduction, not only to the scope of those industries, but to the ability of the workers in Ireland.

From the official publication explaining the features of this section of the Exhibition, we gather that it is calculated that the annual value of the lace manufactured in Ireland cannot be less than £100,000, and as the cost of material is insignificant, the greater part of this sum represents earnings by the makers and the handlers of the lace. Where the Irish Congested Districts Board have established classes for instruction in lace making, there are families (in Mayo and Galway, for example) which had never been possessed of a cow until the younger members began to attend the lace classes, and by their intelligence and industry became able to add from ten to fifteen shillings per week to the family

income. On the whole, it may be said that the lace industry has brought material, moral, and intellectual benefits to those engaged in it.

Among the principal centres for the making of lace and crochet is Youghal, which makes a speciality of the Flat Needlepoint laces. Over two hundred workers are employed, and in a recent year the Sisters in charge of the industry paid out the sum of £5006, which sum included salaries, bonuses, and pensions to old workers, the total receipts for the same period being £5166.

Rosepoint lace is made under the supervision of the Sisters at the Carmelite Convent, New Ross. "Run" and "tambour" laces are manufactured at Mrs. Vere O'Brien's lace school in Limerick, where over fifty workers are employed, and where a good worker can earn up to 14s. a week. Kinsale is also a centre for this speciality, in the making of which a hundred girls are employed in a workroom, and up to fifty in their homes. "Appliquéd" lace has been made in the neighbourhood of Carrickmacross since 1820, and the industry at this place was extended some time ago by the introduction of the "guipure" lace. In this neighbourhood, as in other parts of Ireland, the industry went through periods of depression, until it was revived and

placed on a sound basis within the past twenty years by the Sisters of St. Louis. Since then the work has grown steadily, till to-day some two hundred families are deriving benefit from it, many of them earning a comfortable subsistence and depending on it for the support of their homes, while others supplement the small incomes of their breadwinners by devoting their spare time to the making of lace. The majority of the workers, we are told, attend to their household avocations, and spend much of their time helping with the farm. Taking into consideration that the leisure time only is given to the lace, some idea may be formed of the importance of the industry when it is stated that something like £20,000 was paid to the workers in the first ten years that the industry was managed by the Sisters of St. Louis.

The most interesting development of the Irish lace and crochet industry, and certainly one which has largely directed public attention to this form of employment, has been the introduction of lace making by the Congested Districts Board to districts which roughly represent the poorer parts of Ireland. Beginning with one or two small classes having a very small production, the classes have steadily grown and spread till the sum paid to workers for lace, crochet, and such-like

stuff, exclusive of hand knitting and embroidery, amounts to close on £30,000 a year. The earnings of the girls employed under the Board's auspices in making lace and crochet are, according to a recent official report, sufficient to make up, in many of the poorest families, the deficiency in receipts upon which depends whether the family is to make a painful struggle in poverty or to live in comparative comfort as regards the necessities of life.

These lace classes, the report declares, besides bringing much-needed employment and earnings to many of the poorest and most inaccessible spots in the congested districts, have proved the undoubted artistic talent of the workers ; which is one of the results we claim would arise if the system of home industries were extended in Great Britain. In Co. Sligo the workers travel on foot over the mountain and through the bog up to eight miles, the double journey of sixteen miles being necessary in order to secure material and designs to execute at home. Learners travel eight miles each way four times a week for three or four weeks until able to work at home, and the average wage when proficient is 10s. per week.

HOMESPUN MANUFACTURE.

Although the rate of remuneration for this

description of work might by many be considered low, it is still a considerable industry in Southwest Donegal, where the production is brought to market every month in the local fairs of Ardara and Carrick.

The demand for genuine homespun is almost exclusively amongst better-class people, who use it largely for golfing, fishing, shooting, and motoring outfits ; and it is not a little surprising to find that a family living in some remote glen, say, of the Donegal Highlands, and working under conditions which make them farmers, shepherds, dyers, carders, spinners, designers, weavers, and finishers by turn, produce a material which exactly suits the fastidious taste of the best-dressed people in Britain. It is to be hoped that where a genuine homespun, honestly made and tastefully designed, is produced, it will continue to find a ready market ; at any rate the demand for such an article at present is in excess of the supply.

For a considerable number of years the Irish Congested Districts Board have endeavoured to encourage the producers of homespuns in congested districts, by making loans on easy terms of repayment for the purchase of improved looms, reeds, heddles, shuttles, spinning-wheels, etc., which loans have been largely availed of.

The Board have also assisted the industry in a variety of other ways, even to the extent of procuring good Cheviot rams and selling them to the peasantry at much reduced rates, as the Cheviot wool is very suitable for homespuns and the sheep are of a hardy breed.

HAND-LOOM LINEN, CAMBRIC, AND DAMASK
WEAVING, AND LINEN EMBROIDERY.

There were, at the time of the Irish International Exhibition, already referred to, a thousand hand-looms or so employed in the North of Ireland in the manufacture of damasks. The increased perfection of the power loom manufactures, however, has materially decreased the demand for the hand-woven damasks ; although some of the very finest damasks and cambrics are not woven by power, the very fine yarns not being able to stand the strain of the power loom.

The county of Down is the centre of the cottage hand-loom industry, and contains more looms than all the other counties where this industry has taken root, viz. Armagh, Antrim, Londonderry, and Donegal. A very few looms may be found in other counties not named, but to all intents and purposes these counties are the industrial ones of Ireland, and not only turn out

all the hand-loom manufactures, but also practically all the linen cambrics.

There are now some three thousand hand-looms employed in the weaving of linen cambrics, none of which are collected in factories, but all are in the workers' own cottages, and are distributed, about 80 per cent in the county Down, and 10 per cent each in the counties of Armagh and Antrim. The wages earned in weaving plain cambrics average between 8s. per week by learning boys and girls to 18s. per week by skilled men. Rather more than this is made by weavers weaving fancy cambric cloth. Undoubtedly hand-looms will always be employed on the finer grade of goods ; and if here and there the industry is declining, it is no doubt due either to lack of care on the part of the workers or to a public intent upon purchasing cheaper and less worthy products.

HAND-EMBROIDERED LINENS.

This branch of the linen trade, quite an unimportant one a few years ago, has now grown to be almost the most important. A demand has sprung up all over the world for these goods ; and here, as in the hand-loom industry, the individuality of the worker is largely stamped on the work turned out, and the agents through-

out the country, who give out the work among the cottagers, soon get to know each worker's speciality, and give out heavy or fine work as best suited to each individual. Many thousand peasant girls are employed in this industry in Ulster, and if the girls in the other three provinces could only be trained to do as good work, plenty of employment would be found for all.

OTHER INDUSTRIES.

The production of Connemara curtains was first introduced into Ireland by the Irish Congested Districts Board. German and Swiss workers were brought over by the Board to give instruction in making this handsome lace in the West of Ireland. Their place has long since been taken by Irish girls, who readily learned the industry now carried on in South-west Galway at Carraroe and Kilkerrin, and on Lettermore and Gorumna Islands.

A great deal of home work is done in the counties Londonderry and Donegal in connection with shirt making. The work is mostly piece-work, and 9s. is the wage earned generally by sewers when trained.

A further important cottage industry in the county of Londonderry, and also in the county of Tyrone, is the making of fine underclothing.

The “hand-sewn” work has been eclipsed in late years by the “machine-made,” but in each case the work is done at home. Machines are supplied to the workers by the manufacturers on the “easy payment” system, and they eventually become the former’s property. There are few instances where a worker has made default in payment, and it may be said that there is hardly a cottage within forty miles of Londonderry that has not one or more sewing machines. The wives and daughters of farmers engage in it as well as the labourers’ wives and daughters; and the work has proved a great blessing to the people.

Art metal work is making satisfactory progress in the North and also in the South of Ireland, and wood carving also is advancing.

Apart from the foregoing, rural factories have been started or revived for glove making, straw hat making, and for the manufacture of carpets, etc.

The domestic and rural industries which the Irish Congested Districts Board have established in widely different parts have been lace and crochet making, knitting, spinning and weaving, kelp making, boat building, barrel making, granite quarrying, sea fishing, and carpentering, in addition to which they have inaugurated numerous domestic economy classes.

WHAT WE SPEND IN IRELAND ON DOMESTIC
INDUSTRIES.

According to the last official report in our possession (that for 1913), the Board spent in that year £58,450 on administration, £13,901 on technical instruction, £4391 on loans to industries, and £4043 in grants and other expenditure on industries. These figures may perhaps astonish the British public, who certainly are not commonly aware of the fact that such large sums of money are being spent from public funds annually in Ireland for these purposes. In making this remark, we do not wish to cast the slightest reflection on the officials of the Board, or upon the wisdom of the policy of encouraging the industries in question ; but merely to show that after all we should not be asking Parliament to make any startling precedent if, in the absence of private funds, we asked that a substantial sum of money should be devoted to the revival and establishment of suitable home industries in the rural districts of Britain. As a fact, the officials of the Irish Congested Districts Board were confronted with most disheartening difficulties when they started their work, some of which were the deliberate inventions of the very class whose lot they

particularly desired to better ; and it was only by the exercise of considerable tact and patience that they succeeded in winning the confidence of the peasantry and in reforming the conditions under which the poorer classes lived and worked. Such difficulties would not exist to the same extent, if at all, in the rural parishes of Britain. Is it too much, then, to solicit on behalf of our British rural population some measure of that practical assistance which has been so freely lavished upon the Irish rural population, and for which there is further precedent in some of the Continental examples which we have been able to cite ?

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION: "WAKE UP!"

BEARING in mind the economic position both of the agricultural labourers and of many others little removed from the labourer class in the villages of Great Britain, and also bearing in mind the excellent results which have followed the establishment of domestic industries elsewhere, it seems to us that the Government, in the interests of our villagers, ought not to let this matter slide; especially as it is naturally bound up with the agricultural and rural problem. The time, indeed, is particularly favourable for action; as Germany will be crippled for some time in her productive power, and we ought to obtain the trade from her and others in these goods which otherwise will go elsewhere. We have seen that the trade is not unimportant; and, if it be admitted that it would be advantageous to our people to capture, at least some part of it, then the rest is but one of ways and means.

We have stated that the labourers for want of

capital cannot start these industries for themselves ; but, even if they could provide the capital with which to do so, the lack of instruction would still exist, whilst there would also remain the necessity for organising the market in their favour. Rural factory work may—for the most part—be left to the business instincts of the capitalist, though, for the reasons already given, they should be urged to “ruralise” more and more their urban industry ; but the domestic industries must, we think, either be organised to some extent by the Government, or, better still, by an Association of the voluntary or “public utility” kind, backed up for some few years with a grant from the Development Fund or some other public source. We prefer the Association method, because in a short time we should expect the industries to become entirely self-supporting, and because the less industry is ultimately controlled, or interfered with by Government officials, the better.

AS TO SUCCESS.

We have stated herein some of the things to which such an Association would need to give attention ; and we cannot but repeat we feel that under careful management success of the most gratifying character would attend its efforts. There must be very many people of the better-to-

do order in our country who would be only too glad to be connected with such an Association ; and we appeal to them to give more than a passing consideration to this question, feeling assured that if they do so an Association of the kind alluded to, founded and carried on by them upon broad yet well-defined lines—and, as we hope, with reasonable financial encouragement from a sympathetic Government—will prove not only of the utmost benefit to our village people, but of lasting satisfaction to themselves. The movement is one which need not and ought not to involve them in the slightest pecuniary embarrassment, but it would give them work to do and an altogether new interest in life, especially in their own localities. As to the amount of the work, this would be neither great nor irksome ; and would be mostly performed by a local secretary or committee in each parish, and at times convenient to themselves. The chief work would be that of the Manager in the Metropolis and the executive committee controlling him ; which committee might be partly elected from the affiliated parishes, and partly nominated by the Government, the last only so long as funds emanated from that source.

We are proverbially slow in this country in making up our minds to any course of action ;

but we venture to suggest that the matter under notice—the establishment on a remunerative basis of rural domestic industries—is one which should be decided upon with all possible speed. The agricultural workers and their families are ready to do all in their power to second the efforts of those who may come to their aid. That much, at least, may be taken for granted. It would be a thousand pities, as well as a cruel shame, if the opportunity to befriend them—the poorest and one of the most worthy classes of the King's subjects—were allowed to pass away without anything having been done to embrace it. We hope—and with some confidence—that this reproach will not be merited. It is, however, in an especial manner “up” to the Government to encourage this movement; for, without such encouragement, we are satisfied nothing of permanent and national importance will be accomplished. If they are not yet fully informed, or if any of them have doubts, let them enquire into the whole subject and act in accordance with the information obtained. To stand still and do nothing in the face of the facts herein recorded, and which meet the rural reformer at every turn, is not a position which, we feel, they will with credit sustain. “Wake up!” should be the motto everywhere.

APPENDIX

ON the following pages will be found illustrations of a large number of articles (mostly hand-made) together with the prices charged for the same by retail shopkeepers. They are placed here as being more convenient for reference purposes than if placed amongst the text of the book.

All these articles, and many more for which space cannot be found, are well within the capacity for manufacture on the part of village workers.

The retail prices are in most cases added because we have been asked for such information by those who, having started home crafts, have been at a loss to know what they ought to charge the dealers or shopkeepers for the finished articles.

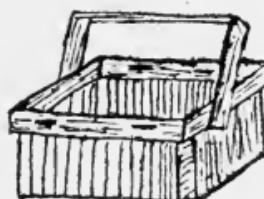
BASKET-WORK GOODS



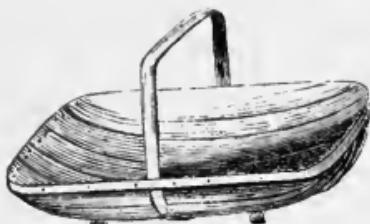
FANCY WORK BASKET
AND STAND



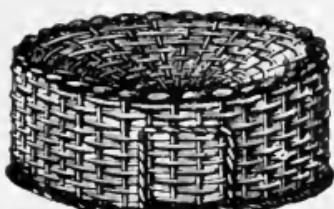
FANCY WORK BASKET



CHIP BASKET
With or without handle

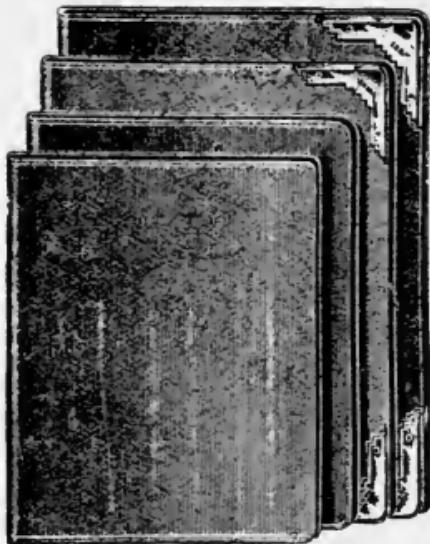


A SUSSEX "TRUG" BASKET



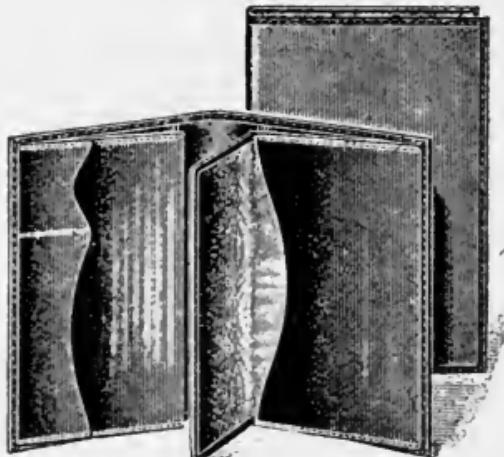
BASKET FOR BIRD-CATCHING

LEATHER GOODS



LEATHER BLOTTERS

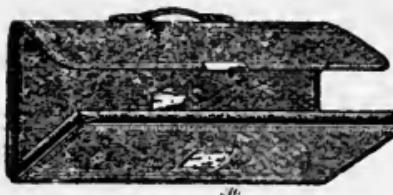
Shop Price : 4/6 to 18/6



LEATHER LETTER CASES

Shop Price : 5/9 upwards

LEATHER GOODS—*continued*



LEATHER MUSIC CASE

Shop Price : 5/- to 11/-



LEATHER BRIDLE STRAP

Shop Price : 7½d. to 3/3



LEATHER LUGGAGE LABEL

Shop Price : 4d. to 6d.

COLLAPSIBLE LEATHER COLLAR
HOLDER

Shop Price : 1/10 to 4/3



LEATHER RAZOR STROP

Shop Price : 1/- to 2/6

METAL GOODS

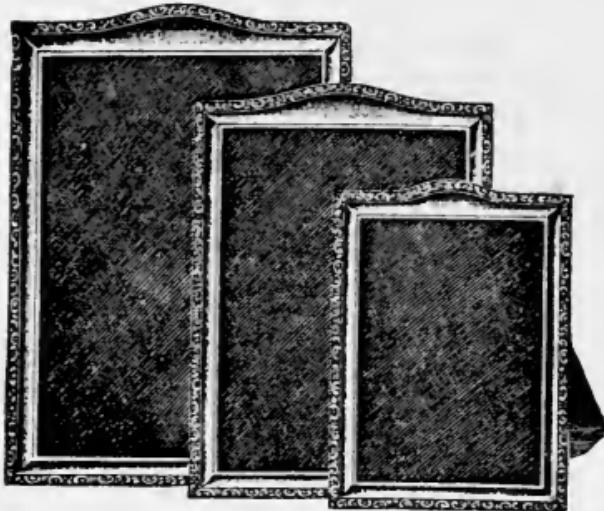


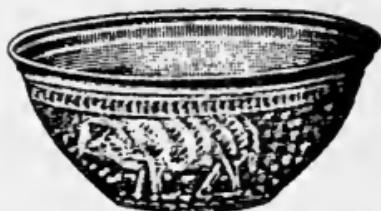
PHOTO FRAMES (SILVER OR WOOD MOUNTED)

Shop Price (Cabinet size and Silver mounted) : 5/11



METAL LETTER CASE

Shop Price : 2/-



BRASS FINGER BOWL

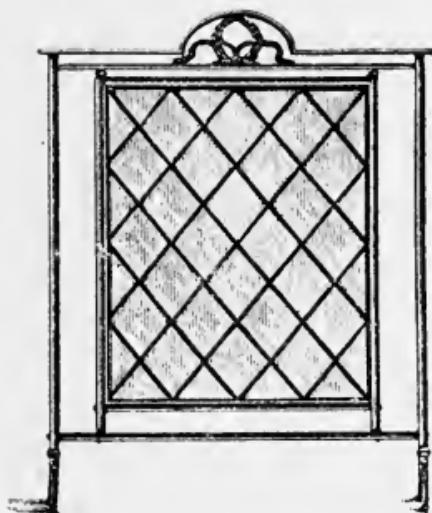
Shop Price : 1/- to 2/-



BRASS-WORK HEARTH STAND (TOP 10½")

Shop Price : 6/6

METAL GOODS—*continued*



BRASS SCREEN (22" x 28")

Shop Price: 35/6



BRASS (INDIAN) FLOWER HOLDERS (6" to 10" across)

Shop Price: 3/11 to 12/6



ANTIQUE BRASS CHESTNUT ROASTER

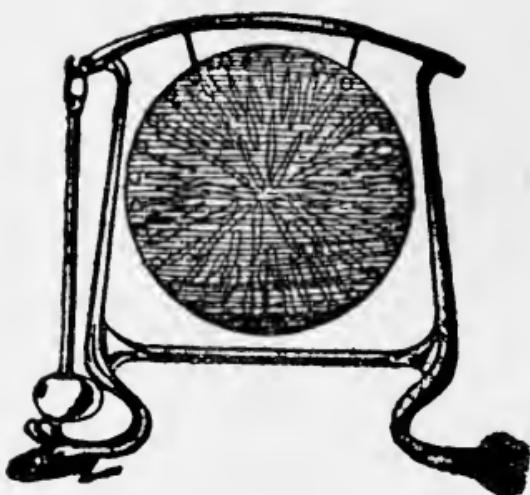
Shop Price: 7/-



INDIAN SCOLLOPED BRASS TRAY (12" to 27")

Shop Price: 7/6 to 37/6

METAL GOODS—*continued*



BRASS GONG (6")

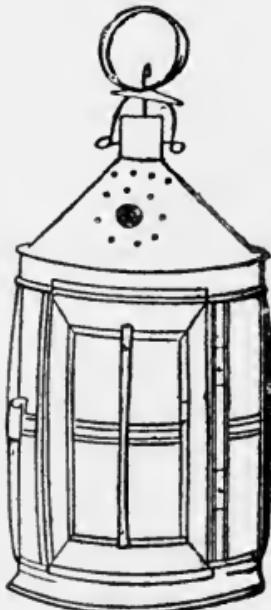
Shop Price : 12/6



TWISTED BRASS

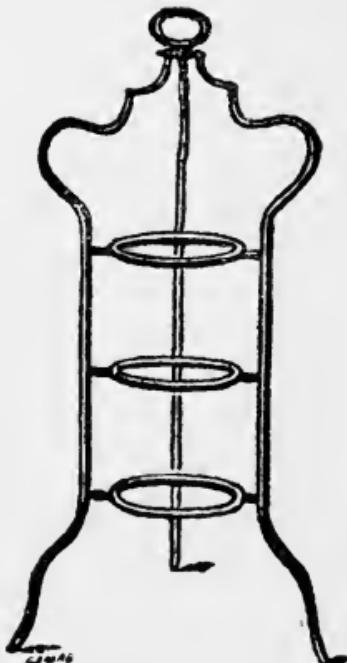
TOASTING FORK

Shop Price : 2/6



OLD-FASHIONED BRASS LANTERN
(FITTED WITH HORN) 12" x 6½"

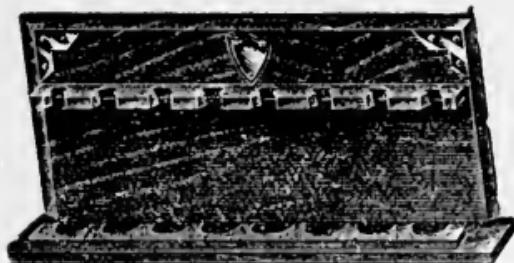
Shop Price : 21/-



TUBE BRASS CAKE STAND

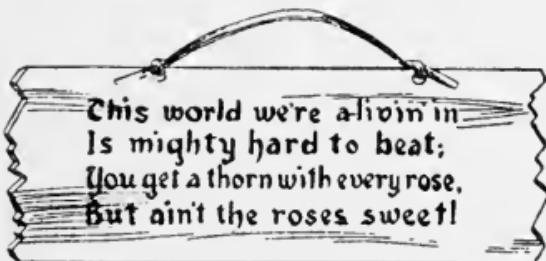
Shop Price : 17/3

WOOD-WORK GOODS



WOODEN PIPE RACK (8 PIPES)

Shop Price : 3/9



MOTTOES IN WOOD (18" x 7")

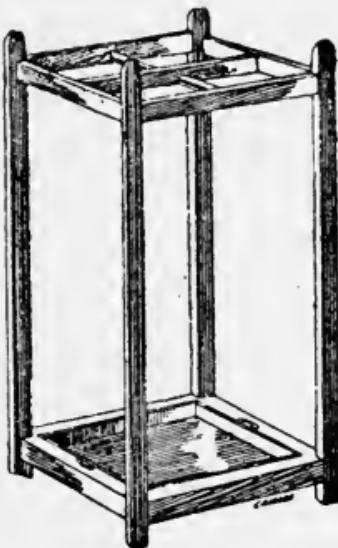
Shop Price : 2/6



SMOKER'S WOODEN CABINET

(12" x 11" x 7½")

Shop Price : 12/6



WOODEN UMBRELLA STAND

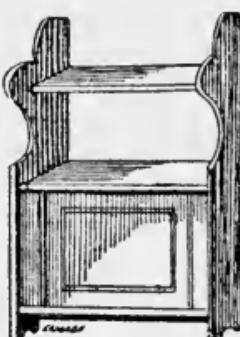
Shop Price : 4/9 to 8/11

WOOD-WORK GOODS—*continued*



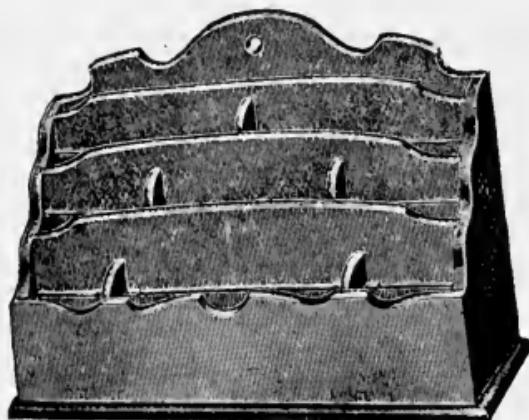
WRITING DESK (LEATHER AND
CARDBOARD)

Shop Price : 4/11



MEDICINE CHEST
(22" x 15")

Shop Price : 2/11 to 7/6



WOODEN STATIONERY RACK (12 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ")

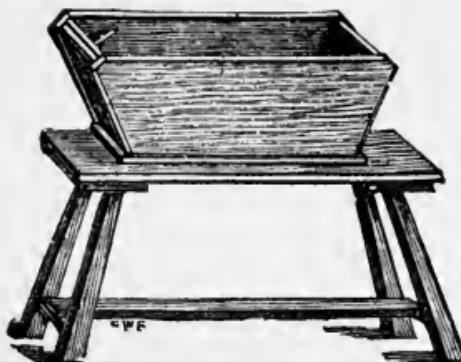
Shop Price : 8/9



WOODEN FOLDING TABLE

Shop Price : 6/-

WOOD-WORK GOODS—*continued*



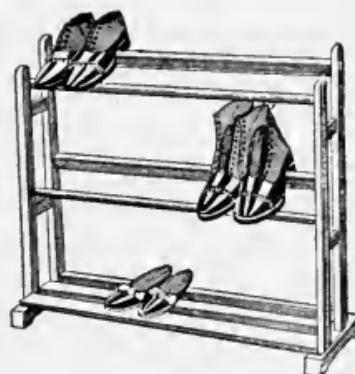
WOODEN WASHING TRAY (24" to 33") AND STOOL

Shop Price : 6/- to 11/-



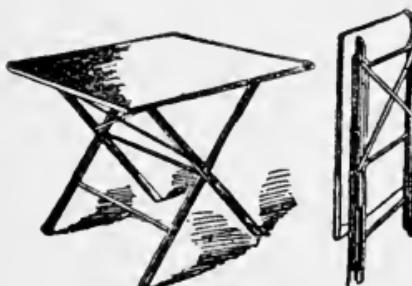
WOODEN COAL BOX

Shop Price : 8/3



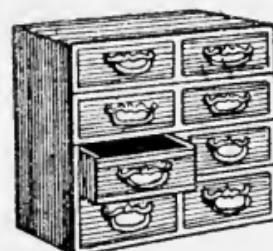
WOODEN BOOT RACK

Shop Price : 11/3



WOODEN CARD TABLE
(22" sq. top)

Shop Price : 3.11



WOODEN CABINET DRAWER
(Oak : size 12" x 4½" x 10½")

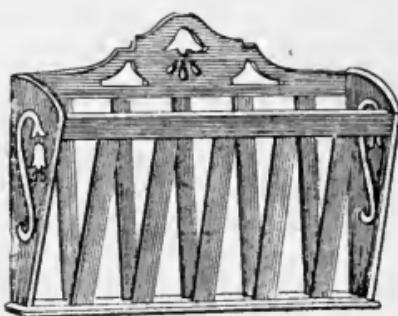
Shop Price : 23/-

WOOD-WORK GOODS—*continued*



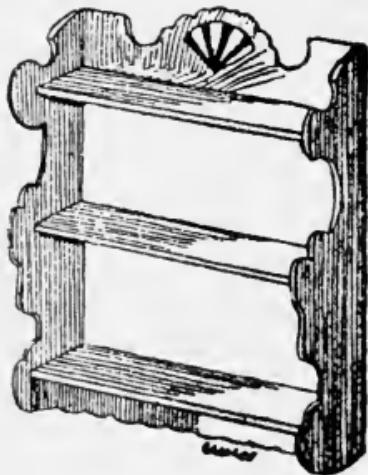
“PIGEON” HOLES FOR
STATIONERY

Shop Price : 12/3 to 23/6
(according to size)



WOODEN PAPER RACK
(18" long)

Shop Price : 3/6



BOOK SHELF
(22")

Shop Price : 2/11 to 7/6



LADIES' BUREAU
(26" x 45" x 9 1/4")

Shop Price : 19/6

TOY MANUFACTURES



FLAGS: ANY NATION

Shop Price : 3/- to 4/- each



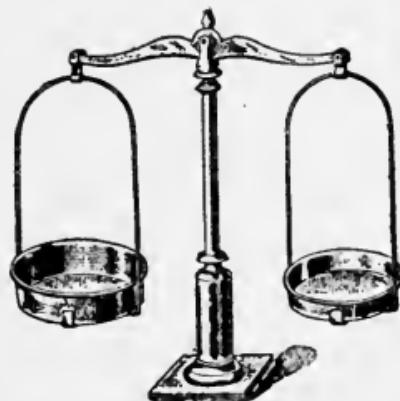
TOY DOLL

Shop Price : From a few pence to pounds



BABY WALKER

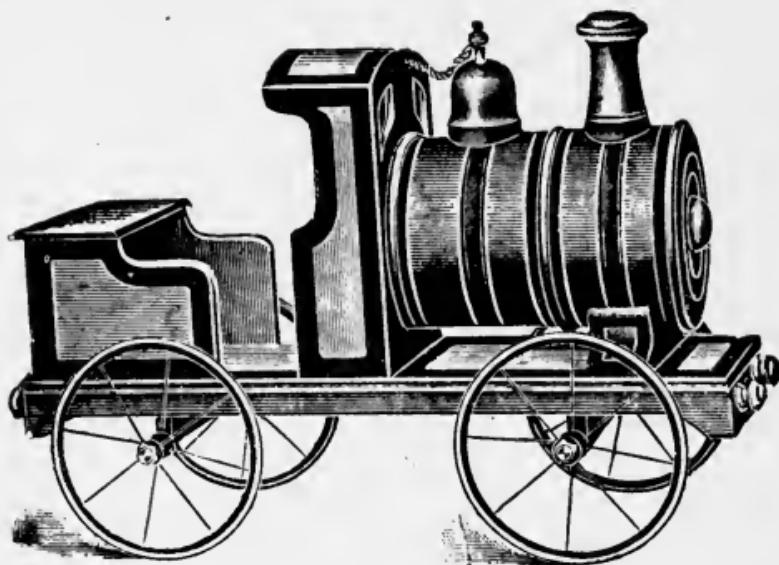
Shop Price : 6/9



TOY SCALES

Shop Price : 6d. to 4/6

TOY MANUFACTURES—*continued*



TOY ENGINE (IN WOOD)

Shop Price : 14/9 (28" long)



TOY ANIMALS (IN WOOD AND JOINTED)

Shop Price : 6d. each

TOY MANUFACTURES—*continued*



TOY CAT

Shop Price: 2/6 to 8/6



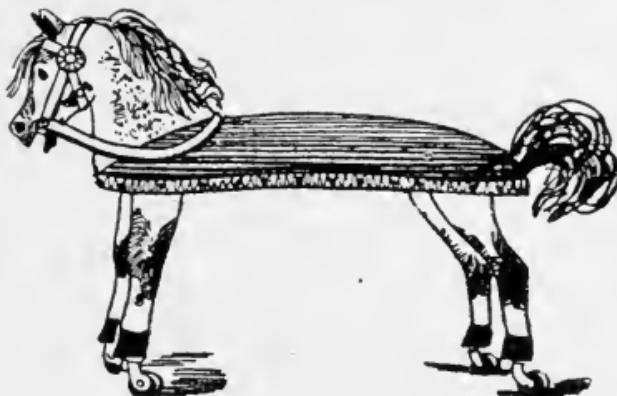
TOY YOKE AND PAILS

Shop Price: 5/9



TOY RABBIT

Shop Price: 1/- to 2/9



TOY HORSE

Shop Price: 2/11 to 4/11

TOY MANUFACTURES—*continued*



TOY SENTRY BOX

Shop Price : 6½d.



TOY SKITTLES

Shop Price : 4/3 (6") to 12/6 (12") a set



TOY POP GUN

Shop Price : 4d.



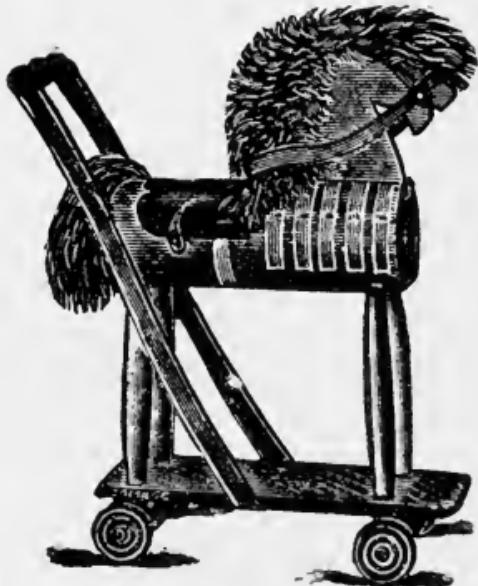
TOY MASKS (IN ANY COLOUR)

Shop Price : 6/- to 9/- per dozen



TOY PAPER HAT

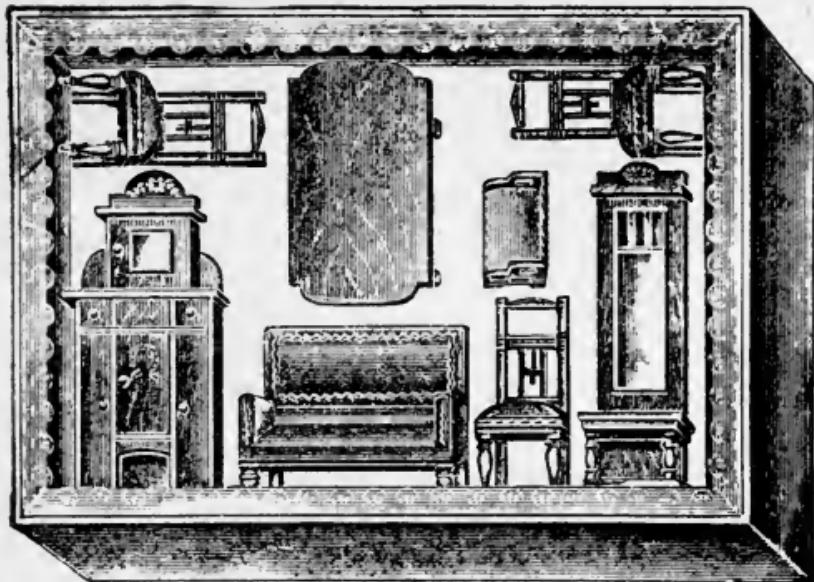
Shop Price : 6d. to 5 6 per dozen



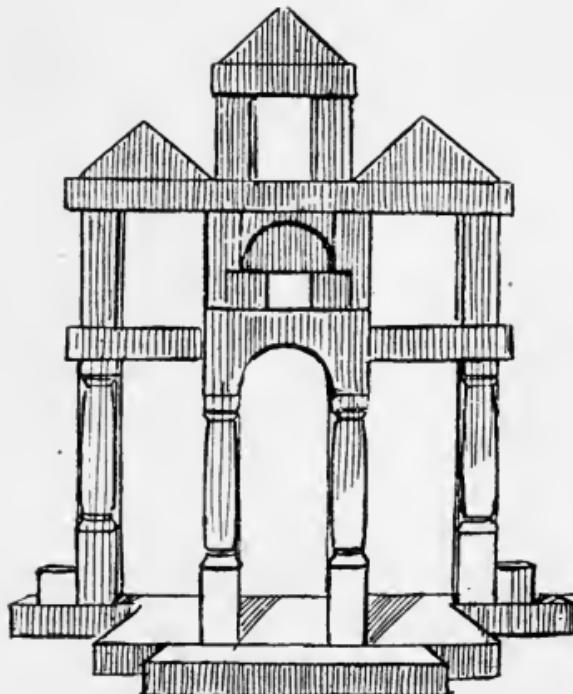
TOY HORSE

Shop Price : 9d. to 6/-

TOY MANUFACTURES—*continued*



TOY BEDROOM SUITES
Shop Price : 1/- to 8/9



TOY BRICKS (VARIOUS DESIGNS)
Shop Price : 6d. to 42/- a box

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